

ADRIAN ROGERS

LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



J U D E

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

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Jude

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The Believer's Security Blanket

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: February 10, 1985

Main Scripture Text: Jude 1:1–4

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saint.”

JUDE 1:3

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Introduction

I want you to take your Bibles, please, and turn to the next to the last book in the Bible, the Book of Jude. Today, we start a brand new series under the general heading “A Handbook of Survival.” The Book of Jude is very short—only 24 verses—but it is loaded with dynamite. We’re going to read together verses 1 through 4—Jude, verses 1 through 4. All right: *“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and*

denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:1–4).

I want to ask you a question. What do these schools have in common? Harvard, Yale, Columbia, William and Mary, Dartmouth, Princeton. "Well," you say, "They're all colleges." You're right—all universities. Right, but what do they have in common? You say, "Well, they're Ivy League schools." Most of them, but what do they have in common? They were all founded and built for the propagation of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Every one of them had a Bible foundation; every one of them was founded for the preaching of the gospel, the training of ministers, and godly Christian laymen, to spread the gospel across America.

What a tragedy! The same thing that has happened to these schools has happened to many once-great denominations. And the same thing that has happened to many once-great denominations has happened—God help us—to many churches. There has been an apostasy. The word *apostasy* means "a falling away from the faith," or, "a turning from the faith."

And that is what the little Book of Jude is all about. It is a warning of the apostasy—the lapsing from the faith, the turning from the faith—that is going to take place in the last days. Now the devil has tried two ways to destroy the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ and the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

First of all, he has tried through persecution—that is, he's tried to persecute the saints and to put them in danger—even of their own lives, much less of their property. But persecution does not work very well. There's a saying among missionaries that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. Not only did love grow where the blood fell, but churches grow where the blood falls.

I mean, when we are willing to die for the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than stopping the work of Christ, it simply impels the work of Christ. And so many times, when the enemy comes to try to stamp out the fire, he only scatters the embers, and new fire is started. So the devil backed off, and said, "Well, if I can't beat them, I'll join them; and, if I cannot work from the outside with persecution, I will work from the inside with infiltration; and, I will destroy the biblical base upon which those churches operate." And that is what he has done. And you see the key in verse 3—Jude says, "*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith*" (Jude 1:3).

Now Jude wanted to write another Book of Romans. He wanted to write about our common salvation; he wanted to preach a gospel message. He was all ready to do it, and the Holy Spirit said, "Jude, you can't preach that. You can't write that. You wanted to write about the common salvation, but you're going to have to write that we're to earnestly contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered unto the saints."

Because, you see, here's the problem in verse 4: "*For there are certain men crept in*

unawares” (Jude 1:4). Now he’s talking about the apostates and how they get in. This word *crept* means that they came in the side door. Also, the word is used of a person who would slip into water without making a ripple. Oh, how clever they are! They come in very clandestinely; they come in very quietly and very stealthily. They come in; and, from the inside—like termites destroying the foundation of the building—they work.

Now Jude said, “I have written to warn you about this, that you should earnestly contend for the faith.” When he says, *the faith*, he’s not talking about faith like “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by which we are saved”; but he’s talking about the revealed body of truth that we call *the Bible*. Now you see what I have, right here? That’s called *the faith*. This is the revealed body of truth, the Bible. And the Bible says that we are to earnestly contend for the faith.

Now let me just say, by way of introduction, before I give you the title of the message this morning—let me tell you just a little bit about *the faith*.

A. **The Faith Is Complete**

First of all, I want to speak to you about the completeness of it. Now my Bible says that you’re to “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 1:3). But literally, it says, “once for all delivered unto the saints.” And some translations give it this way: That is, “God gave it, and God finished it; and, He’s not going to add anything to it—not one jot, not one tittle shall pass from the law ’til all be fulfilled. But not one jot, nor one tittle, shall be added to the law ’til all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18) This is God’s Word—and, friend, it is complete. We don’t need any more new revelation.

Now listen to me. We live in a day and an age of charismatic excesses and a day of cultism, where people are adding to the Word of God and subtracting from the Word of God.

I’m reminded of the man who stood up and read the Scriptures. And he said, “If there are no additions or corrections, the Scriptures stand approved as read.”

Now dear friend, there are no additions; there are no corrections. And you listen to me—listen, listen. *If it is new, it’s not true*. Now God may give you new insights into the truth; God may illumine the truth to you, but God is not going to give you or anybody else any new truth.

“The faith was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). Look in verse 8—he says, “*Likewise also these filthy dreamers...*” (Jude 1:8). Who are these dreamers? What does the word *dreamers* mean? Are these people who go to sleep in church, who come, and sit down, and look so reverent, they make the pastor think they’re meditating? I know what kind of meditation you’re doing. You ought to pray, when you sit down, “Now I lay me down to sleep.” That’s not what he’s talking about—that’s not what he’s talking about, when he calls them *dreamers*. He’s talking about people who

have visions, people who have extra-biblical revelations, or things that they have made up.

B. The Faith is Correct

Now friend, the Bible is signed, sealed, and delivered. It is the faith that is “once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). It is complete. And not only is it complete; it is correct. Now you see, if you are a dreamer, if you are visionary, if you think you have some new revelation, you’re going to be wrong, because that is all subjective. This is objective truth. It is never wrong; it is always right. It is correct. You see, there’s a difference in being certain and being right—did you know that? Did you know that you could be certain and be wrong?

I was in New Orleans, one time, and I was in seminary. I think I’d been preaching at the Rescue Mission. I was going back to home, I thought, but I got confused. They call it the Crescent City. It’s built on an arc and the river there, of New Orleans; and, I thought I was headed in one direction away from the river, but I kept on ending up at the river and kept on ending up at the river. I said, “But I just know I’m going in the right direction.” I turned around again—my gyro in my mind, my compass in my mind, was all confused. Have you ever just lost a sense of direction? I was so certain I was going in the right direction, but I kept ending at the river. Do you know what I did? I just decided I’d start going by the signs, and I got straight home. All I had to do was just read, you know.

Now listen. Sometimes you will be dead certain you are right and you are dead wrong. That’s the reason the Bible is here. That’s the reason we have the faith that is not only complete—it is correct. The Apostle Peter was on the Mount of Transfiguration. He saw the Lord transfigured before him. He heard God speak from Heaven; but then, he said, in 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 19: “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy*” (2 Peter 1:19). More sure than what you’ve seen, more sure than what you’ve heard—valid as it may be—more sure is the Word of God.

C. The Faith is Committed to You

It is complete; it is correct. But now listen. It is committed to you. Now he said, “We’re to earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). Do you see it right there, in verse 3? It has been committed to you. That means that you’re a steward over this. I hear people say, “Oh, you don’t need to defend the Bible; the Bible will defend itself.” That sounds good. I’ve been guilty of saying the same thing. But ol’ Jude didn’t say that. Jude said, “Contend for the faith.” Stand up for the faith; speak up for the Bible. John Calvin, from whom we get the term *Calvinism*, said, “A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward, if I heard the Word of God attacked and did not stand up for the Bible.” We don’t, because many of us today

don't want to seem contentious and because many of us don't want to enter into anything distasteful.

We are seeing the faith of our fathers that we sang about, when we sang, "Rise up, O men of God," we're seeing that eroded and disappearing. Now I want to tell you, dear friend, the apostasy is very real.

Jot these Scriptures down in the margin of your Bible. Second Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 3—the Apostle Paul is speaking of the end time; and, he says that the end time cannot come, the Antichrist cannot come, and all of the cataclysmic things of the end time cannot come, until the apostasy comes first. Second Thessalonians 2, verse 3: *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The words *falling away* come from the Greek word that we get the word *apostasy* from. The end times cannot come until that apostasy comes. Paul told Timothy the same thing—2 Timothy 4, verse 3: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears"* (2 Timothy 4:3). And again, the Apostle Peter warned, in 2 Peter chapter 2 and verse 1: *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction"* (2 Peter 2:1).

Now that's the setting for the book. Now it's a very frightening book; and, therefore, Jude wants to give his people assurance. Now I'm going to give you a title for the message: "God's Security Blanket." Now what God does here, in this little Book of Jude, and through Jude, is just to give to God's people a security blanket. He just wraps this book up in some verses that deal with security. The first verse and the last two verses deal with the security of the believer. That is, he just wraps it up in a little blanket that I want to call a *security blanket*. Why is this? Because, you see, when you read the Book of Jude, if you're not careful, you'll just get to wondering if anybody is saved—even you.

I mean, because Jude is so strong, this book is so powerful, when he speaks of the apostasy and the heresy and the falling away, you might get to thinking, "Well, maybe I can lose my salvation," because Jude is going to talk about some who seem like they were once saved, but they lost their salvation. And I believe that Jude wants to make it very, very clear that, once you are a child of God, once you are born again, once you are born of the Spirit, and once you truly become a partaker of the divine nature, you can never, ever again be a lost soul.

Now let's look at those verses. The first verse is in Jude: *"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called"* (Jude 1:1). Three things Jude says about us that tell us about the security of the believer:

I. God's Sovereign Purpose

The very first is this: We are called; we are called. Now in this sentence, it's the last word: *called*. But it was put last, in the Greek language, for emphasis. Now we put things first for emphasis; and so, some translators—and some of you—have a more modern translation, where the word *called* is the first word, because that's being fair. That is giving the English sense of what the Greek meant. This is the emphasis; it is the very first thing.

And so what is the first reason—what is the first reason for my security and your security? God's sovereign purpose. Now that's worth writing down: God's sovereign purpose. Now the word *sovereign* means “the decree of a king, a ruler against whom there is no rising up.” God has a purpose, and that purpose is seen in that God called you. Now this word *called*, here, does not mean *call*, like, “I call Paul, and, I say, ‘Hi, Paul; come over here,’”—no, no, no, no. The word *called* means “an official summons.” You see, your salvation did not begin with you; it began with God. If it began with you, you might lose it; but since it began with God, you can never lose it, because the Bible says, “He is able to finish what he began” (Philippians 1:6). And God called you. You see, had He not called us, none of us would have been here. “*We love him, because he first loved us*” (1 John 4:19).

Now I want us to think a little bit about this word *calling*. It means “something official.” It reminds us of another verse, right away—Romans chapter 8 and verses 28 through 30—listen to it: “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the*”—what's that next word? *Called*—“*to them who are the called according to his purpose*”—now, I'm talking about God's sovereign purpose. Are you listening?—“*them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he*”—that is, God's Son—“*might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified*” (Romans 8:28–30).

A. The Golden Chain of Salvation

Now we're in deep water here, but there's a golden chain of salvation—five links—none of them can be broken.

1. God Has Foreknowledge

First of all, the Bible says, here, that God has foreknowledge. God knows the future, as well as the past and the present. God has foreknowledge. And God knows things that will transpire, as though they've already transpired. And so God is the great omniscient God.

2. God Predestines

Now the Bible says, when God foreknows, that one whom He has set His affection upon shall come to Him, He predestines that person to be like the Lord Jesus. Whom God foreknows, then, He also predestines. That is, it is determined ahead of time that you're going to be like the Lord Jesus, that you're going to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus.

3. God Calls

Now when God foreknows, and God predestines, then God calls, and God sends the gospel to that person so they can hear it, so they can believe it, and so they can receive it. And so God calls that person.

4. God Justifies

Then, the one that God calls, He justifies. Now what does it mean to be *justified*? It means "to be made like the Lord Jesus Christ." And God makes you in His sight—absolutely, totally righteous, justified by the grace of God. Somebody said, "Just as if I had never sinned—justified."

5. God Glorifies

All right, and then, those who are justified, the Bible says, "He has glorified"—not, "will glorify," but, "has glorified," because God lives in eternity. It's already done, friend. In God's mind, God sees you already glorified.

You say, "Well, I don't think I understand all of that." I'm glad you don't, because I don't either, and I wouldn't want you to get ahead of me. As a matter of fact, *I wouldn't have any confidence in a God I could understand.* I am glad that there are some things about God that I don't understand. But dear friend, there are some things that we do know, and I'll tell you what we do know:

That which has been settled in eternity cannot be undone in time. Amen? *And that that has been decreed by Heaven cannot be annulled by Hell.* God has called you, and those that God calls will come. "Well," you say, "now, wait a minute, that's wonderful for those who are called; but, maybe I'm not one of the called. What will I do, Pastor, if He doesn't call me?" Hey, I've got good news for you. Do you want to come? You may. You may. You see, that's so wonderful.

Let me give it to you in a verse: in John chapter 6 and verse 37, Jesus said, "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me*"—as a matter of fact, it's stronger: "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me." They're coming. That's one of the exciting things about preaching the gospel, folks: They're coming. "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me." But now listen to the second part of that verse—"*and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*" (John 6:37). You want to come? Come, and He'll receive you. Isn't that beautiful? Anybody who wants to come, just get up and come. He

will receive you. And the Bible says—hallelujah—“Whosoever will may come” (Revelation 22:17).

Now listen, friend. That’s truth. God has a sovereign purpose. But the reason that I’m so secure is that my salvation did not initiate with me; it initiated with God. And it is predestined that I’m going to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. He foreknew me, He predestined me; He called me; He justified me; and He glorified me already, in His sight.

II. God’s Special People

And so our salvation, number one, is rooted—our security blanket is this: God’s sovereign purpose. Second reason: Not only God’s sovereign purpose, but also God’s special people. Now look again, in verse 1: “*Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified*” (Jude 1:1). Look at that word *sanctified*. Bible scholars tell us that’s not the best translation. It should be—rather than *sanctified*—it should be *beloved*. And some translations have it that way. Perhaps yours does. It is the same word that begins verse 3: *beloved*. It’s the same word there, translated “beloved.”

Now *sanctified* is good, but *beloved* is better, in this particular instance, because it tells something of the nature of God’s special people. You say, “Well, what’s the difference?” Well, I want to tell you. See that young guy sitting there, on the front row? I love him, but Joyce is my *beloved*—and there’s a difference. I like the difference. She is my love; she is special, and God loves her. We are “*accepted in the beloved*” (Ephesians 1:6). And who is the beloved? The Lord Jesus: “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (Matthew 3:17). And we are accepted in Him; and, therefore, God see us as God sees Him. And God’s name for His own dear children is His *special people*, and we are *beloved*.

Now this word *beloved* is what we call a *perfect participle*. What does that mean? Well, it means there’s a finished action in the past that has a result on the present. It is something that cannot be changed; it is fixed, and it is settled. Because it is settled in the past, it affects us right now. We are God’s beloved. Every now and then, I’ll say something profound—and I’m about to do it, and I want to warn you, okay? Now listen—listen. Are you paying attention? You’re a child of God. Now pay attention. *There is nothing you can do to make God love you more.* I’m going to tell you something else: *There is nothing you can do that will make Him love you less.* Isn’t that a beautiful thought? Nothing you can do that will make you love Him more, and there is nothing you can do that will make Him love you less, because, dear friend, He can’t love you any more, and He will not love you any less.

You see, we’re valuable, because He loves us. *He doesn’t love us because we’re valuable; we’re valuable because He loves us. He doesn’t change us so He can love us,*

but He loves us so He can change us. He just loves us; He just loves us. We are His beloved.

How much does He love us? John 17, verses 22 and 23—Jesus Christ is praying His high priestly prayer, and He says to the Father: *“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them”—*that is, my beloved—*“that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know”—*now listen to this—*“that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me”* (John 17:22–23).

Now folks, did you hear that? How does God love you? As He loved Jesus—the same way: “Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me.” God loves you, as He loves the Lord Jesus. That’s too much to take in, isn’t it? That’s the reason the Apostle John, in 1 John chapter 3, verse 1, got to thinking about this love, and he said, *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us”* (1 John 3:1). Do you know why he said, “Behold, what manner of love?” He was fishing for an adjective to describe that love, and he couldn’t find one. He started to say, I suppose, “Behold, what super love, or what fantastic love, or what colossal love, or what spectacular love.” He might even have thought of supercalifragilisticexpialidocious love. What love! And he couldn’t find the word.

I heard of an Indian who was sending a love message to his girlfriend by smoke signals. He had a little fire on one hill, and she was way over across the plain on the other hill. He was sending up little puffs of smoke trying to tell her how much he loved her. It was out in the desert, when they were testing atomic bombs; and, about that time, he looked on the horizon, and saw a tremendous mushroom cloud. He said, “Boy, I wish I had said that.”

That’s the way ol’ John was, as he was sending up little smoke signals. And there is this atomic bomb kind of love, and he doesn’t even know how to express it. So he just simply says, *“Behold, what manner of love.”* And those words *manner of love* literally mean “what kind of love from another.” What foreign kind of love is this from another place? What kind of unearthly love? What otherworldly love is this? What kind of nonhuman love is this? *“Behold, what manner of love...that we should be called the sons of God”* (1 John 3:1).

And you want me to tell you another reason that Jude says that we’re secure? Folks, we are in the beloved, and God feels about us the same way He feels about the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that brings me to a wonderful verse: Romans chapter 8, 38 and 39—listen to it. The Apostle Paul said, *“For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:38–39). He didn’t leave anything out, did

he, folks? He mentions ten strong enemies: death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, or any other creature.

There is nothing that can separate you from the love of God, and nothing you can do to make Him love you more, nothing you can do to make Him love you less. You are in the beloved, and God loves you, as He loved the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a pretty good security blanket.

III. God's Strong Power

Now first of all, we've talked about God's sovereign purpose—you're called. Secondly, we've talked about God's special people—you are beloved. And then, thirdly, I want you to think about God's strong power—you are preserved. Look here, if you will: *"And preserved in Jesus Christ"* (Jude 1:1).

Now look at the word *in*. That's adaptive, and it most likely means "preserved by Jesus Christ." Either way you put it, *in* Jesus Christ, or *by* Jesus Christ, all are tremendous truths. But the idea is that it is Jesus Christ who's doing the preserving—His strong power. You see, you're no safer than the one who is keeping. This word *preserve*—I've always liked that word, because some of the saints look pickled, but this word *preserved* literally means "kept," "kept." And it has the idea—not of a guard who's keeping a prison—but it has the idea of a mother, who's watching over a little baby with tender loving care.

Now if you are a baby, and your mother is taking care of you, where is the source of your security? In you, or in the one who is taking care of you? You see—listen and pay attention—your security is no better than the one who is making you secure. Isn't that true?

Now if you're kept by Jesus Christ, do you think you're secure? You see, do you think He's going to lose you? That's the reason He said, in John chapter 10, verses 28 to 30: *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* Out of my hand: *"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one"* (John 10:28–30). You're in better hands than Allstate, friend.

You're in His hands; you're in His hands. It is not that you keep your salvation; it is that He keeps you. You are preserved by Jesus Christ, and to feel insecure is really to doubt Him. Let me give you some other Scriptures. Second Timothy chapter 4, verse 18: *"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom"* (2 Timothy 4:18). Who delivers us? The Lord. Who preserves us? The Lord. Second Timothy 1:12: *"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him"*—now, I'm persuaded that

I'm going to hold out faithful to the end. *"I know whom I have believed"*: not *in* whom, I just know *whom*. And Paul didn't know *about* Jesus; he knew *Jesus*—*"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"* (2 Timothy 1:12).

Now the Lord Jesus prayed, in John chapter 17 and verse 15, to the Father, concerning us: *"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil"* (John 17:15). Did Jesus ever pray out of the will of God? Of course not. Did He ever pray a prayer that wasn't answered? Of course not. He said, "Father, I thank You that You always hear Me" (John 11:41–42). And Jesus prayed, "Father, keep them." And that prayer is an answered prayer.

And so look how Jude brings the blanket around at the tail end of the book. Now at the first part of the book, that's one side of the blanket. Now at the tail end of the book, look how He sums it up in verse 24: *"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling"*—do you see that? Who keeps you from falling? You? No—*"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen"* (Jude 1:24–25).

You see, dear friend—listen—when you put two of these truths that we've learned together, you're going to see something tremendous. On the one hand is God's fathomless love: He loves us as He loves the Lord Jesus. We're in the beloved. On the other side is God's unlimited power: He has glory, and majesty, and dominion, and power. Now when you put that love and that power together, do you see why we're secure?

Now I would do anything I could do to protect one of my children, but I'm only human. I would do anything I could do to keep one of my children from perishing, but I'm only human. But God has a love that makes my love for my children pale into insignificance. He has that kind of love for you. And God has tremendous power. He's able to keep you from falling. "Well, you know," somebody says, "if I believe that Baptist doctrine, *once saved, always saved*." Correction: It's not a Baptist doctrine. If we've got any Baptist doctrines, we'd better get rid of them. If it's not in the Bible, I have no business preaching it. If it is in the Bible, it's a Bible doctrine. Amen?

Now look—well, you say, "Well, then, if I believe that doctrine of once saved, always saved, I'd just get saved, and sin all I want to." Well, *I sin all I want to. I sin more than I want to. I don't want to. And if you still want to, you've never been saved.* You better get your wanter fixed, or you need a new wanter. You need to be born again.

I want you to see the man who wrote this book. His name is Jude, and he describes himself—and we'll talk about him later—but he calls himself *"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ,"* in verse 1: *"the servant."* And the word that he used is the Greek word *doulos*,

which means “a bonds slave.” Some of you know that my son is serving on a missionary ship, and the name of that missionary ship is *Doulos*. I kid my wife and tell her our son is on a slave ship, because the word *doulos* means—we call it...translated, it sounds a little nicer, “servant of Jesus Christ.” But what it literally means is “a bonds slave of Jesus Christ.”

Now let me tell you about a bonds slave. A bonds slave had no personal possessions and no personal rights. I mean, if his master wanted to, he had to die for his master. He was a man under oath. Now Jude was that kind of man. Jude believed in eternal security. But it did not make him a rebel; it made him a bond slave of Jesus Christ. Amen?

Conclusion

This kind of security doesn't make me want to sin. It is a great, great, great impulse to holiness. Oh, such love, such matchless wonderful love, that we have become children of God, accepted in the beloved! And

*Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, and my all.*

—ISAAC WATTS

One other word, and we're going to have the invitation. Do you know, when you get in a service like this, and you talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, there are people in a service like this who feel a burning hunger to know God, but something keeps them from giving their heart to Jesus? And do you know what it is? They know how weak they are, and they say, “You know, if I were to go down there, and give my heart to Christ openly and publicly, and trust Him, then I might not be able to live the Christian life; and, I might just fall away, and be a disgrace to the Church, and to myself, and to the Lord.” Now you pay attention to me. The same God who saved you is the Lord who will keep you. Now you listen. If you want to be saved today, I promise you, on the authority of the Word of God, that, if you come to Him, He'll not cast you out. And He will receive you. And if He receives you, He will keep you. What a security blanket we're wrapped up in! Hallelujah! Now let's bow our heads in prayer.

The Battle for the Bible

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: February 17, 1985

Main Scripture Text: Jude 1: 1–7

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

JUDE 1:4

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Introduction

All right, I want you to take God’s Word and find the Book of Jude. It is the next to the last book in the Bible, so it will be very easy to find. It is a small book, and you may overlook it. It’s only 25 verses. But how pertinent are these 25 verses! Today, we are reading Jude, verses 1 through 7. Turn to it. The title of our message is “The Battle For the Bible.”

“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified

by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 1:1–7).

When I was a little boy, on Saturday afternoons, I used to like to go to the movies. It cost about a dime or fifteen cents to get in the matinee. And we liked to see Tarzan. I enjoyed seeing Tarzan, and we watched Tarzan and all of his episodes. There was one time when I would get especially frightful, and worried, and concerned about Tarzan, and that would be when Tarzan would be swimming, and there would be a crocodile on the shore. Do you remember that? And that crocodile would be there, like a log; and then, he'd open those eyes and blink a couple of times. And then, the crocodile would slide off the bank and into the river. And Tarzan would be there, swimming, and the crocodile would not hardly make a ripple but just, very silently, would slip into the river. And I used to think, “Oh, Tarzan, swim faster! He's going to get you!” Somehow, Tarzan always out-swam the crocodile—obviously. But that was a time of trauma for a little fellow. Now something like that is what Jude is describing here, in the Book of Jude. He talks about the apostasy that is going to come.

Now the word *apostasy* means “to fall away from the faith.” And Jude is warning about the apostasy of the last days. And he tells how apostates get into the Church and into the institutions. And he says there, in verse 4: “*There are certain men crept in unawares*” (Jude 1:4). And those words crept in were used, in the Greek language of that day, to speak of someone, for example, who could slip into water like a crocodile, without even making a ripple: deadly, dangerous and sinister. That's the way apostasy is. And so James is writing to warn us about the apostasy and about the spiritual crocodile that would do us danger. And he's warning us to be aware, to be involved, and to be informed, because to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

There is a battle for the Bible. There is a fight for the faith. And it is a fight to the finish, with no holds barred. And you cannot afford to be neutral. As a matter of fact,

sometimes people say, “Now Pastor, just preach the gospel. Just preach salvation, and don’t worry about the rest of this.” That’s almost the way that Jude felt. Jude said, in verse 3: “Beloved, I was going to write to you about our common salvation” (Jude 1:3). That is, “I was going to write to you about the virgin birth. I was going to write to you about the blood atonement. I was going to write to you about the new birth. I was going to write to you about how that salvation by grace is through faith. I was going to write to you about how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I was going to write to you about the hope of Heaven we have. I wanted to write to you about our common salvation. But the Holy Spirit of God wouldn’t let me.” The Holy Spirit of God said, “Jude, warn them that they should earnestly contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).

And so the Book of Jude is an alarm. It is reveille, and it is God’s alarm clock. It is God’s red lantern, swinging in our face, to warn us of the apostasy of the last days. And the Bible says that we are to earnestly contend for it. And those words, *earnestly contend*—right in the middle of those words is a word that we get our English word, *agonizing*—fight for the faith. And if you are looking for a cheap way, an easy way, or a lazy way, you’ll not find it. And you dare not. You must not be uninformed. Now there are several things I want us to learn.

I. The Dangers of Apostasy

First of all, I want us to learn the dangers of apostasy. I’ve already alluded to them in the introduction. But notice in verse 4: “*For there are certain men crept in unawares*” (Jude 1:4). I’ve already told you that this word was used in the language of that day to speak of someone who could slip into water with out making a ripple. It was also used for people who would come in uninvited. For example, it is the idea of slipping in the side door. Here’s a party, and everybody is coming in the front door—all of the invited guests—and somebody crashes the party. He just slips in through the side door and mingles with the other guests, as though he’s invited; he sort-of sneaks in.

This word was also used of a person who had been exiled from a country—banned and banished from a country—and yet, that person sneaks across the border and comes back into that country, without being repatriated. That’s the idea. It was used in a court of law for a very clever lawyer. When this clever lawyer was arguing a case, he would just slip an idea in. He would drop a few words. He would put a thought in there that, at that particular time, didn’t seem to be all that relevant; it didn’t seem to make all that much difference. But what he was doing was planting a seed. And later on, he would come back and play upon that thing—a very clever lawyer, who knew how, just at the right time, to slip that idea in, ever so carefully, ever so stealthily. And that’s the way the devil works.

A. **The Deception of Apostasy**

What is the danger of apostasy? Number one: It is the danger of deception, the danger of deception. Apostates are slick. Apostates are slippery. Apostates slip in, and the Bible warns us. Why, the devil himself sometimes transforms himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). And so the apostasy is so deceitful.

B. **The Destruction of Apostasy**

But not only because of the deception of apostasy, but also because of the destruction of apostasy. You see, apostasy brings destruction, as we are going to see. And it destroys schools. It destroys denominations. It destroys churches. It destroys souls.

I told you last week that, of the first 100 colleges and universities that were built in the United States of America, 88 of them were founded for the propagation of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, including Princeton, Harvard, and Yale. Did you know these schools were founded for the glory of God? For example, Yale had its beginning in 1701, and it was there for the preaching of the gospel. As a matter of fact, Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale, advised the class of 1814—and I want you to listen to what he said—he said, “Christ is the only true, the living way, of access to God. Give up yourselves, therefore, to Him, with a cordial confidence, and the great work of life is done.” That’s what the president of Yale said. I wonder if the president of Yale would say that today.

Or, can you let me give you the Christ-centered rules of Harvard, in 1646? Here were the three rules of Harvard: Number one: “Everyone shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life.” They said, “That’s the purpose for coming here: to know God and eternal life, which is in Jesus Christ.” Secondly: “Our goal is seeking the Lord. As seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, everyone shall seriously, by prayer, in secret, seek wisdom of Him.” That is, the students there, at Harvard, are to be praying every day, and, “God give us wisdom, as we study.” Thirdly—here’s the third reason: “Everyone shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day, that they may be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observation of language, and logical, and practical, and spiritual truth.”

Every student of Harvard was to be a student of the Word of God. Every student of Harvard was to be praying that God the Holy Spirit would give him wisdom. Every student of Harvard was to be trusting Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. That was the goal that was the aim of the school. Fifty-two percent of the graduating class of the 17th century became ministers of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. That’s Harvard.

Princeton, in its early years, insisted that, for a person to be on the faculty, you had to be, quote, “convinced of the necessity of the religious experience for salvation.” John

Witherspoon, who was the first president of Princeton, said this—listen: “Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ.” “Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ.” And then, he said, “Cursed be all learning that is not coincident with the cross of Christ.” And then, he said, “Cursed be all learning that is not subservient to the cross of Christ.” I like that.

But now, you don’t find that in those schools today. I’m not here to knock those schools, as such. Obviously, they are very prestigious schools. Obviously, very learned and scholarly people, and even people with good morals, may be teaching and living there. But that is not the point. The schools have apostatized from the faith.

The same thing has happened to once-great denominations. I want you to hear what the missions secretary of a great denomination has said—a once-great denomination, I might add. A large denominational mission board said this (quote): “We have given up all hope of saving this generation. Our efforts are now directed toward the next. No more missionaries will be sent out to merely evangelize. Our hope is in education.” Now that’s the hope of a mission board. And you say, “Institutions?” Yes. “Denominations?” Yes. “Ministers?” Yes. Even ministers have become apostates.

Consider these statements by certain well-known preachers. One: “I do not believe in the doctrine of salvation by blood. Thank God, I’m not saved by the blood of anyone. Salvation by the blood of the gospel is of the butcher shop.” Now that’s a man who is called *reverend*, *doctor*, and *minister*. He stands in the pulpit and does not believe in the blood atonement. Again (quote): “The critical view of today is that the gospel miracles represent the crude ideas of a superstitious age, and that they are, to that extent, untrustworthy.” That is, “You cannot believe the miracles in the gospels; they are untrustworthy.” Who said that? A minister. Again, I quote: “Those who recorded the virgin birth were doubtless influenced by pagan fables, seeking, by these, to secure for Him”—that is, for Jesus—“the honor of celestial divinity.” That a man who takes his salary to be a preacher of the gospel could say such things—that is the deadly danger of apostasy.

II. The Description of the Apostate

Now let’s think not only about the dangers of apostasy, but let’s think of the description of the apostate. What are they like? Well, look, if you will again, in verse 4: “*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation*” (Jude 1:4). That literally means, “They were marked out.” “Who were foretold”—that is, it has not taken God by surprise. One thing about it—the apostasy of the last days has been clearly prophesied. And so it is here, according to the Bible. And apostasy does not disprove the Bible, but it really proves the Bible. And “they were before ordained” or “marked out to this condemnation.”

Now here is the description of them: number one, “ungodly men”; number two, “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness”; and, number three, “and denying the Lord God and our only Lord Jesus Christ.” Now Jude describes the apostate under three headings: First of all, he describes their character; and then, he describes their conduct; and then, he describes their creed.

A. Their Character—No Reverence

Now here, he describes, first of all, their character. And he calls them “ungodly men,” *ungodly men*. Now what does this mean? It doesn’t mean, “They don’t talk about God.” Oh, they talk about God. They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5). Thayer, in his lexicon, says that this word *ungodly* means “without reverential awe.” That is, they have no respect for God. They have no awe of God. The ingredient that is missing in their life is a fear of God. They are ungodly, without reverential awe for God. Over there, in verse 8, it says they “*speak evil of dignities*” (Jude 1:8). What that means is that they have loose tongues; and they blaspheme; and they laugh; and they joke about holy things. Many of them are religious people. But they are, at the bottom line, ungodly. And so as to their character, put down: “no reverence.” They are ungodly. They have no reverential awe for the things of God. They speak evil of dignities.

B. Their Conduct—No Restraint

But not only their character, but also their conduct. He says also, here, that they “turn the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude 1:4). Now *lasciviousness* means “unbridled lust.” That is, not only is there no reverence; there is no restraint. They live any way that they want. They pretend to be religious, but they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. And today, if a minister stands in some pulpit and preaches against sin, the congregation gets their feathers all ruffled, and they get a huff. They say, “He doesn’t understand that God is a God of love, and God is a God of grace.” And they have become a disgrace to grace. They’ve turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.

Surely, we are saved by grace, but I want to tell you something: The Bible says, in Titus chapter 2, verse 11: “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*” (Titus 2:11–12). The Apostle Paul said, “*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*” (Romans 6:1–2). You see, what happens today is that people are not living in grace; they are living in disgrace and calling it *grace*. They’ve turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.

Now let’s get it down practical. Friend, you can make a list of how you want to live and how you want to behave. And I’ll find for you, in America, plenty of churches where

you'll fit in—no matter what you put on that list. They have churches today that are ordaining homosexuals. We are having churches today that do not condemn pre-marital sex. We're having churches today who say nothing of—even condone—this grizzly business of abortion. We have churches today who, not only do they fail not to preach against liquor, they actually serve it, sell it. They have turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness, because, you see, your character determines your conduct. And when there's no reverence, there is going to be no restraint. There is no old-fashioned holiness in churches today. And that, my dear friend, is a mark of the apostasy of the last days. They turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.

C. Their Creed—No Rule

But then, thirdly, not only *no reverence*; not only *no restraint*; but then, thirdly, *no rule*. Look at their creed: "They deny the Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." That's what he says here: "They deny the only Lord" (Jude 1:4). As a matter of fact, the word *Lord*, there, is a very interesting word. Do you know what it is in the English? Well, it's translated "Lord." But we have another English word that comes from this Greek word, and it is *despot*. This word is the "only despot."

Now we think of a despot in a bad connotation. But what it means is "the person who is totally ruler, the one who is sovereign, the one who is in control of everything." They don't like that. I mean, if there is not reverence, you can be certain there is no rule. They are not going to let God be the only Lord God and our Savior Christ. They are rebels against God. And they don't bow to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and they deny Him. Some will deny Him with their lips. Others deny Him with their lives. But it is a part of the apostasy. And my dear friend, what a terrible, horrible thing it is!

Their character—they're ungodly; their conduct—they turn grace into lasciviousness; their creed—they deny the only Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ. They have no reverence. They have no restraint. They have no regulation, no rule. They refuse to bow to God. And yet, many of them are not outside the churches. The sad thing is they are inside the churches. They have come in the side door. They slipped into the water. They've come across the border. They have infiltrated denominations, and churches, and schools, and seminaries. See, what the devil could not do by opposing the Church from the outside, he has begun to do by infiltrating the Church on the inside.

III. The Destruction of the Apostates

Third thing: Think not only of the dangers, think not only of the description of the apostate, but think of the destruction of the apostates, for Jude gives us solemn warning. Notice here, in verse 5: "*I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this*" (Jude 1:5). That's a good lesson on preaching, right there. Never

assume that, just because people heard something, they still know it, or remember it, or they still act upon it. You have to keep saying it over, and over, and over again. Now Jude said, “You already knew this, but I’m going to put you in remembrance of this.” There are certain things that we need to be reminded of.

I heard about Jack Taylor, a preacher friend of ours. Jack has preached at our church. Jack was preaching, one time, with a lavalier microphone like I’m wearing—only he didn’t have a wire. He didn’t want to have any strings attached, and he had a wireless microphone. We use them here. And what a wireless microphone is, is the person who is speaking actually has a little transmitter; he’s a little radio station, and he is sending a beam out. That’s all right, as long as it works, but those wireless microphones, sometimes, will pick up a signal from another station, especially citizens band radios. And Jack was up there preaching; and suddenly, rather than him, another voice comes out, and it says, “How long you going to say that?” And without breaking stride, he said, “Until they get it, honey.”

That’s the way Jude was. He just decided, “You once knew this, but,” he said, “I’m going to remind you of it again. I’m going to refresh your memory about this—how God feels about apostasy.” And then, he mentions three examples: First of all, he mentions the example of Israel, who came out of Egypt; secondly, he mentions the example of angels who fell from Heaven and are reserved in chains of darkness; and thirdly, he mentions Sodom and Gomorrah—these, and how God destroyed all of these, and how God judges all of these.

A. The Example of Israel—Destroyed in Spite of Their Profession

Now first of all, look at this matter of Israel, in verse 5: *“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not”* (Jude 1:5). Now there was a great host of people that came out of Egypt. Many of them were sincere in their faith, but not all of them. Some of them became rebellious, and God literally destroyed them. Some of them—the ground opened up and swallowed them, because they did not believe.

Now the interesting thing is that they all had a religious experience. They all came out of the land of Egypt. There was the shedding of the blood of the Passover lamb. There was the miracle of the Red Sea. There was the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire. There were all of the miracles—all of this. And they participated in all of that. But they never really believed.

Now that tells me something, friend. There are some people here, in this building today, who may be apostates, who do not dream that they are apostates. Do you know why? They are professing Christians, but they are not possessing Christians. Now these

people perished, in spite of their profession. That is, they were with the people of God, but they never really believed. They were apostate, and God judged them.

Now pay attention, because what I have to say is very, very important. So far as I can tell, in searching the Bible, nowhere does the Bible ever tell us to look back to some experience for the assurance of our salvation. Now if I am wrong in that, and you can think of one, you come up and tell me, and I'll learn from you. But I can't find that in the Bible—where the Bible tells a person, “If you want to know if you are saved, look back to some experience where something happened to you.” Now something may have happened to you, but that's not where you get the assurance of your salvation. That may be where your salvation came, but that's not where you get the assurance of your salvation. The Bible doesn't tell us to look to the past; the Bible tells us to look to *the right now* for the assurance of our salvation.

You see, I can go out sometimes, right now, soul-winning and visiting. And I'll knock on the door, and the people say, “Yeah, we're Baptist. Yeah, yeah, we don't go anymore. We're not living for God. No, I don't really care much about going down there. We've got other things to do. Sunday is the only day we have,” and so and so, and so forth. Well, perhaps you need to be saved. “Oh no, I'm saved. Man, I remember as a nine-year-old boy. Man, I was there when it happened. I can remember going forward. I can remember getting saved.”

Now friend, let me tell you something: The important question is not, “Were you saved?” The important question is, “Are you saved?”

Just like the important question was not, “Were you married?” The important question is, “Are you married?” If you are, you were. Do you understand what I mean? But friend, you see, if you are not married now, you may never have been married. You may have been, but you may not have been. So how can I know whether you once were, if you are not now?

You see? The proof of your salvation ought to be sitting right there in the choir. The proof of your salvation ought to be right in that chair. The proof of your salvation ought to be right there in that pew—not looking back to the past. But right now, is the person sitting in that chair? Right now, is that person believing in Christ—Christ only, Christ always—for his salvation? Is Jesus Christ real to you? Do you have a changed life? Does God's Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you're a child of God? These people came out of Egypt. They had a religious experience. But they did not believe, and God destroyed them. That's apostasy, apostasy.

That's the reason I began this series of messages on the Book of Jude, talking about eternal security, if you'll remember last week—nobody can be truly saved and lose their salvation. But a lot of people can be professors and not possessors. These people came out; they were saved out of Egypt. But God destroyed them, because they did not

believe. They did not believe. And so here's the destruction of apostasy: They were destroyed in spite of their profession.

B. The Example of Angels—Destroyed in Spite of Their Position

Others were destroyed in spite of their position. Look in verse 6: *"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day"* (Jude 1:6). There was a certain class of angels that entered the destruction of sin—vile, immoral sexual sins—I believe, in the days of Noah. I believe these angels cohabited with women, and they produced a race of monsters called, in the Bible, *nephilim*, or, "men of renown." And God destroyed an entire civilization because of what happened. It's a terrible, horrible thing. These are not just ordinary demons, because ordinary demons are not in chains, right now. Ordinary demons are free and loose.

These are special class of angels. Well, you say, "Well, angels could not have had that kind of relationship with people." You'd better go back and read of Lot and of Sodom and Gomorrah. Just go back to that Scripture. It's a terrible, vile, horrible thing that happened. And there is a lot that we do not understand about this, but the point of the matter is this: that here are these angels now—bright, shiny, holy angels—filled with lust and immorality; angels that were once very close to the throne of God—ministering spirits, flames of fire—now reserved in chains, everlasting darkness, destroyed by their sin.

What's God telling us? God is telling us, dear friend, that you can be destroyed in spite of your profession—that's Israel. You can be destroyed in spite of your position—those are the angels. You may be a pastor. You may be a deacon. You may be a seminary professor. You may be a Sunday School teacher. But do you know Jesus Christ? I don't care what kind of a lofty, exalted position you may have. How the mighty are fallen! (2 Samuel 1:19). What a dangerous, deceptive thing is this thing called *apostasy*!

C. The Example of Sodom and Gomorrah—Destroyed in Spite of Her Privilege

And then, he brings the last illustration, and that is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Look again in verse 7: *"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner"*—that is, like the angels—*"giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh"*—and actually, the word *fornication*, here, is a stronger word than the normal word for fornication; it means "the grossest of fornications." It's a compound word. It speaks of vileness; it speaks of sodomy; it speaks of homosexuality—*"going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire"* (Jude 1:7).

And here was a once beautiful, glorious land that went down, down, down into the

very quagmire and filth of degradation; and, God destroyed them with fire and brimstone—obliterated them. And He left Sodom with its smoking ruins, as an example of those that after should live ungodly. They are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. They are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. They are now in Hell.

Had you been in the world at that time, and wanted to vacation in the most beautiful spot on earth, you probably would have wanted to go to Sodom. Now at that time, before the ravages of sin, the Promised Land was indescribably beautiful—a land of mountains, valleys, hills, waterfalls, luscious crops—but, the part of that land that was the most beautiful of all was Sodom. Do you remember when Lot had a choice as to where he wanted to go? When he could choose the best, do you know what he chose? He chose Sodom—the well-watered plains, the grass knee-high. Oh, all of the things that were there! What a garden spot it was! What a privileged place it was! What a pleasant place it was! And yet, God destroyed them, because of sin.

And why did the sin come? Because the apostasy came. You see, they had known the truth. When Sodom was destroyed, one of the sons of Noah was still alive on the face of the earth. You can figure it out. Even angels turned to warn them before they were destroyed. Here were cities that had known the truth and turned from the truth. And when a nation knows the truth and turns from the truth, such vile sin comes into that nation that finally God has to destroy it. That's what bothers me about America.

Do you know what first happened in America? The apostasy in the pulpit and then the sodomy in the land—where we, as a nation, are getting further and further away from the truth, and we turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. And as surely as I am standing here, someone will write me a letter and tell me I have no business preaching the way I'm preaching, because, they say, "I love God." And they'll turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, as surely as I'm standing here.

Now maybe you won't do it now, because I said you would. I'm not angry at people; I'm angry at sin. I love people. But I want to tell you something, folks: Apostasy comes into a land; then, that land cannot survive. *"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required"* (Luke 12:48). And Israel, in spite of their profession—destroyed; the angels, in spite of their position—destroyed; Sodom, in spite of her privilege—destroyed. The destruction of the apostate.

God hates apostasy. Why does God hate apostasy? Because apostasy is the worst sin. Do you know what the greatest sin is? It is to deny the Lord God and our only Savior Jesus Christ. That is the greatest sin. That is the sin of all sins. That is the sin out of which all other sins grow.

IV. The Defense Against Apostasy

One last word: the defense against apostasy. How should we earnestly contend? The

Bible says we are to “earnestly contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). I want to mention six things. I only have time to mention them.

A. Submit to the Faith

Number one: You need to submit to the truth, to the faith. That’s the way to contend for it: to submit to it. Now if an apostate denies the only Lord God and our Savior, what does a real Christian do? He receives the only Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen? You need to be born again. That’s the first thing in your contending for the faith. Make certain that you are in the faith, that you submit to the faith.

B. Study the Faith

Secondly, you need to study the faith. You can’t defend something if you don’t even know what it is. Some of you who think that you’re born again and saved—you don’t even know what the faith is. Some of you—you don’t understand the Bible; you don’t study the Bible. Some folks think the epistles are wives of the apostles. If I were to tell some of you to turn to the Book of Hezekiah, you’d start looking. Don’t do it—it’s not there. Some of you would be trying to find Philippians 66, if I said, “Turn to that.” You need—listen—you need to study the faith. Know it. “Study to show yourselves approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed” (2 Timothy 2:15).

And the battle today—listen—the battle today is over these three areas: number one, the inerrancy of the Scriptures; number two, the deity of Jesus Christ; number three, salvation through faith. Now make certain that you understand those things and that you can give an answer.

C. Show the Faith

All right, not only do you need to submit to the faith, not only do you need to study the faith; but, dear friend, you need to show the faith—that is, you need to let it be shown in your life. Do you know what the proof of my preaching is? You listen. The greatest argument for what I preach, or against what I preach, is the way you live. The greatest argument for Christianity, or against Christianity, is the life of a Christian. The way to contend for the faith is to show the faith in your life.

D. Stand for the Faith

But not only do you need to show the faith; you need to stand for the faith. I mean, there are going to be times when somebody is going to say something that is wrong, and you are going to have to say, “That is wrong, and this is right.” Now you don’t need to be belligerent; you don’t need to be contentious about it. But you need to get a bulldog grip on the truth, and not let it go—and, stand for the faith. And not everybody is going to like you, when you do that. I’ve found that out, my friend. They are going to call you *mean*, *narrow-minded*, *bigoted*, and *opinionated*. They are going to call you a *fundamentalist*,

or whatever. But you just stand for the faith. Stand. Stand. Don't be blown about by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).

E. Support the Faith

I'll tell you something else: You need, dear friend, to support the faith—that is, you need to be a part of a church that stands for the faith. Now one of the tragic things of our day is that good people are in bad churches. They say, "Well, it's my old church, you know, and I just hate to leave." I'm not trying to put you out of a good church; I'm not trying to put you out of a Bible-believing church. But don't you, by your life and your money, support an apostate church. If you do, you'll answer to God for it.

I heard Jerry Falwell this last week, and he said, "Some of you are staying in a church because Grandma is buried out there, in the backyard." He said, "If Grandma could, she'd get up and get out of there." Amen? Now you need to find a good Bible-believing church—and not just this one, not just this one. I'm not trying to get folks to come to Bellevue. Somebody says, "Oh, he's trying to get everybody else out of everybody else's church into his." You're so wrong; you couldn't be more wrong. I am trying to get you—whoever you are, wherever you are—in a church that stands for Christ and the Bible. And don't support something that's not right. That's the way to contend for the faith.

F. Share the Faith

And then, finally, you need to share the faith. I mean, tell others about it. I mean, win souls to Jesus Christ. Get people saved. Get people born again. We tell people, "Keep the faith." No, friend—give it away. Give it away. If you can't give it away, maybe you ought to give it up. Maybe it's not real to you. Friend, let's be telling others about Jesus Christ. And take this Word, which is the Word of God, and share it.

*Holy Bible, Book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine.*

—JOHN BURTON, SR.

Conclusion

But I want others to know about you. Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed.

Battle for the Bible: A Fight for the Faith

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: May 6, 1998

Main Scripture Text: Jude 1:3–7

Sponsored by: Sponsor

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

JUDE 1:3

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Introduction

Would you take God’s Word and be finding the, the Book of Jude. It’s easy to find. Just find the last book in the Bible, Revelation, and turn left, and you’ll come to the Book of Jude. Actually we call that an epistle. It’s more like a postcard. It’s so short, but it is full of spiritual dynamite. And let me tell you why I want us to look at, ah, a few verses. In a moment, we’re going to begin reading in verse 3.

Last Saturday, in our newspaper, in the religion section, there was an article entitled, “Two Religious Philosophies Clash. Two Religious Philosophies Clash.” And this is an article by Terry Mattingly from the Scripps Howard News Service. Now Terry Mattingly

is a religion writer, an editorialist, and an editor, and he's talking about what he's seeing take place in America today. And he's saying in America today there is an alignment that is causing a division in religious groups in America. And I'm going to break into the middle of this long article and read just a little bit to you. And he says, and I'm quoting, "Two years later, Hunter began writing *Culture Wars*, the struggle to define America in which he declared that America now contains two basic world views, which he called orthodox and progressive. The orthodox believe it is possible to follow transcendent, revealed truths. Progressives put their trust in personal experience, even it requires them to re-symbolize historic faiths according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life."

Now maybe that may sound like just so much gobbly-gook to you, but what he's saying is that you have people who are contending for that which is called orthodox, and other people are saying, "No, we need to upgrade what we used to believe."

And then, he goes on to ask this question. He's saying the struggle is over these kind of questions. Is the Bible an infallible source of truth? Can centuries of Jewish tradition survive in the modern world? Can marriage be redefined? Is abortion wrong? Can traditionalists proclaim that sex outside of marriage is sin? Are heaven and hell real? Do all religions lead to the same end? Is there one God or many? What is His or her name or names?

And then, he goes on to say, "Many in the orthodox camp are united in the belief that public life must include room for those who insist eternal answers exist. Meanwhile, progressives are finding it harder to tolerate the views of people they consider offensive and intolerant."

Now what he's saying now is that people who believe in the old-time religion are saying, "There ought to be some room for us." And people who don't believe in the old-time religion are called people who believe in the old-time religion intolerant and offensive.

And then, he goes on to say, "This is not a clash between religious people and secular people. This is a battle between two different approaches to faith."

Well, you may think that's just an incidental thing, but it is not. Friend, there is a battle for the Bible. There is a fight for the faith. And you need to understand that. And it has not taken God by surprise.

We're in the Book of Jude, verse 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in

remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

Now there is a battle for the Bible. There is a fight for the faith, whether you realize it or not or know it or not. Verse 3 says we are to earnestly, earnestly contend for the faith. And this word *contend* literally means to fight.

Now Jude had wanted to write about our salvation. He wanted to write a gospel tract. He wanted to share the wonderful things about the grace of God, the love of God, the holiness of God, the salvation of the saints, the eternal heavenly abode that God has prepared for us. He said, “I wanted to do that, but,” he said, “I didn’t have the luxury.” Look in verse 3. He says, “...when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation (that is, I started out to tell you about the wonderful things we hold in common in Jesus), it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” And I fell the same way tonight.

You know, when I, when I was coming in here, I said, “You know, I don’t like the sound of the sermon title tonight, ‘The Fight for the Faith: the Battle for the Bible.’” I thought it, it would be so much better just to talk about something sweet and wonderful and glorious. And that’s exactly the way Jude was. Jude said, “I wanted to write about our common salvation, but it became needful for me to earnestly exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith.”

Now let me just lay three things basically upon your heart tonight, and I want you to see them right here in the Word of God.

I. The Settled Communication of the Faith

The very first thing I want you to see is the, the settled communication of the faith, the settled communication of the faith. Look again in verse 3, if you will. ““Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith (now watch this) which was once delivered unto the saints.” That’s the reason I call it the settled communication of the faith. It was once delivered. It is never revised. It is never updated. It was once delivered. It was divine in conception. It is delivered.

Now what I do when I prepare a sermon, I don’t create the truth that I preach. If I do, I ought to be ashamed of myself. I am not an editorialist. I am a newsboy. And I am just

simply delivering the message that God has given to me through His Holy Word. That, the, the apostle Paul said the same thing in 1st Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 3: “For I have delivered unto you that which, first of all, I also received...” Friend, if it is new, it’s not true. It is once delivered. As a matter of fact the Greek in this passage literally means it is once for all time delivered. No revisions, no updates.

I heard of a preacher who was quite tired one time. And he was reading the Scriptures and absent-mindedly said, “If there are no additions or corrections, the Scriptures stand approved as read.”

Well, there are no additions. There are no corrections. As a matter of fact, beware of anybody, ah, like, ah, Mary Baker Eddy who wants to give you *Science and Health, The Key to the Scriptures*, or Joseph Smith who wants to give you the *Book of Mormon*, or anybody else who comes along with a new revelation. Put this scripture down in your margin, Revelation chapter 22, verses 18 and 19: “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city; and from the things which are written in this book.” It is divine in conception. It is complete in content. You don’t need to add to it. You don’t need to take from it. It is absolutely unique in its character.

Did you know that the devil had rather pervert the gospel than deny the gospel? That’s the reason Paul said to the Galatians, “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which I preached unto you, let him be anathema. It literally means let him be condemned. It literally means let him be damned. Let him go to hell if he preaches any other gospel. There can be no compromise with the gospel. It would be easier to say two and two is five than to compromise the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now I know that there are plenty of people who think what I’m preaching right now is intolerance and narrow-mindedness. Well, there are certain areas where I want a little narrow-mindedness. I like my pharmacist to be narrow-minded. I like my doctor to be narrow-minded. And I always like my airplane pilot to be very narrow-minded. And in the most important thing, which is the eternal destiny of our souls, we need to understand what Jude is saying, that the faith is once for all delivered to the saints. Now that’s, that is what we call the settled communication of the faith.

II. The Satanic Corruption of the Faith

But now, watch this. I want you to see the satanic corruption of the faith. Remember that Satan is a pervert. The original pervert is Satan. Look, if you will, in verse 4 and see how he does it. “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our

God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now let's learn about Satan's work and how he corrupts the faith. First of all, it's, it's very deceitful what he does. Look in verse 4. It says, "...certain men crept in unawares..." I can't resist but saying that these kind of folks are creeps. "...crept in unawares..." This word is a very interesting word. It was used in contemporary Greek several ways. For example, if a man would have been exiled from a country, and he's expatriated—you cannot be a part of this country anymore—and they put him out of the country, it was used of the man who would come back around and come in over the border, just sort of sneak back in to the country.

It was also used of a lawyer who would be arguing a case and very carefully and very adroitly he would slip some ideas into the argumentation that didn't seem to pertain at all. And so, once they're ensconced in the record, once they're in the hearts and minds of the people, he just slips it in. Nobody seems to pay any attention to it. It just creeps in. Then, later on, he comes back and makes a point out of this and builds a case on it. And lawyers are still doing that same kind of thing today. It speaks of a form of deceptiveness.

This word was also used of an animal that could slip into the water without making a ripple.

When I was a kid, we used to go to the movies and see the old Tarzan movies. And I was always loved Johnny Weissmuller was Tarzan at that time. And he was a great swimmer. And he'd always be swimming. Before the movie's out, he'd be swimming somewhere, and there would always be crocodiles. And Weissmuller would be swimming alone, and you'd see that old crocodile there on the bank, and then you'd see him begin to slither into the water, not make a ripple. And you'd see his nose up over the water, and he'd be going through the water. Weissmuller would be swimming along like that. Any of you ever remember those old Tarzan movies? And I'd sit there, and I say, "Tarzan, man, look out! Here he comes!" Now liberals are like that. They are. I mean, this is what he's saying. They crept in. They're like somebody coming in the side door. They're like somebody who very cleverly and adroitly will destroy your faith and you don't even know what's happening, like a lawyer who's very cleverly arguing a case, or like some amphibian ready to devour.

Those thoughts are akin to this word. He says that there are certain men who have crept in, ah, unawares into our in, into our spiritual faith, into our house of faith. In 2nd John verse 7, the apostle John said, "For many deceivers are entered into the world..."

Well, not only is it, is it, ah, dangerous. Friend, it's so deadly. Don't think we're just talking about the difference between tweedly-dee and tweedly-dee-dum.

Let me tell you some things that have happened in America in the early times of our history. Did you know that America's colleges and universities have absolutely been

ruined and decimated today? I was listening to a program recently played on, ah, Focus on the Family about the crisis in American education. And it, it, it's devastating. It is heart-breaking. Did you know that eighty-five of the first one hundred colleges in America (listen to this) eighty-five of the first one hundred colleges in America were built for the preaching and the propagation of the, of the gospel of Jesus Christ? For example, let's talk about some of these Ivy League colleges.

If you've gone to Yale, you're somebody in today's world. Let me tell you about Yale. Yale began in 1701, and Yale was founded to train preachers of the gospel. Timothy Dwight was the president from 1765 to 1817. Here's what he said to the class of 1814. Now I want you to imagine the President of Yale University saying this today to the, ah, the graduating class. Here's what he said. This is the President of Yale. "Christ is the only true, the living way of access to God. Give up yourself therefore to Him with a cordial confidence and the great work of life is done." That's the graduates of Yale were told this. Can you imagine a university president making a statement like that today?

Harvard was founded as a Christ-centered school. Here are the rules listed in 1646 at Harvard. A. Everyone shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ, which is life eternal. B. Seeking the Lord giveth wisdom. Everyone shall seriously by prayer seek wisdom of Him. Next, everyone shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they may be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observation of language and logical, practical, and spiritual truth. Fifty-two percent of the 17th Century Harvard graduates became preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We're talking about Yale. We're talking about Harvard – founded to get out the gospel.

Princeton, Princeton, in its early days, insisted that every faculty member be "convinced of the necessity of religious experience for salvation." John Weatherspoon, who was the first President of Princeton University, said this. Listen to this: "Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ. Cursed be all learning that is not in coincidence with the cross of Christ." And then, he said, "Cursed be all learning that is not subservient to the cross of Christ." That's the President of Princeton.

Now, folks, something has happened in America. Denominations have become apostate. The Southern Baptist Convention was on its way to becoming apostate. The secretary of a large denominational mission board said, and I'll not name the denomination lest you think I'm picking on people, but he said, and I quote, "We have given up all hope of saving this generation. Our efforts are now directed toward the next. No more missionaries will be sent out merely to evangelize. Our hope is in education." It's a major denomination.

Many preachers have jettisoned the faith, and yet they receive money, stand behind the sacred desk, and sabotage the Savior. Let me just read some, some excerpts from

some preachers. I'll not call their name. Here's one. "I do not believe in the doctrine of salvation by blood. Thank God, I'm not saved by the blood of anyone. Salvation by the blood of the gospel is of the butcher shop." That's a reverend doctor. Here's another quote. "The critical view of today is that the gospel miracles represent the crude ideas of a superstitious age and they are, to that extent, untrustworthy. You can't trust the blood of Christ," one man says. "You can't believe the gos, ah, you can't believe the miracles," another says. Now let me give you another quote. These, these are from people who are paid to minister the truth. "Those who recorded the virgin birth were doubtless influenced by pagan fables, seeking by these to secure for him the honor of celestial maternity." That is, there's no virgin birth. It's just something that crept in by pagan fables. So what I want to say is that this teaching, it is deceptive. It is dangerous. And it is debasing.

Look again in verse 4. "Now there are certain men who crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

A. **Their Character**

Now notice the character of the people who do this. They, they're called ungodly. Do you see that? Ungodly. Now what the word ungodly means, it means destitute of reverential respect and awe toward God. They have no respect. They have no reverence for God and His Word. The thing that is missing is the fear of God.

B. **Their Conduct**

Isaiah says that He honors the man who trembles at His Word. But these men don't tremble at the Word of God. They are ungodly. That's their character. And what is their conduct? Well, look again in verse 4. They turn the, "...grace of our God into lasciviousness..."

Now the word *lasciviousness* means unbridled lust. Did you know, I, I had lunch today with a minister who denomination is in a great battle and may have a schism over whether or not their ministers are going to perform homosexual marriages. And there are people who say, "Well now, if you, if you oppose this, you have denied the grace of God to these people." And there are other denominations today who have already decided that they will ordain practicing homosexuals to the ministry. And there are others who are teaching from the pulpit that God is not against a loving relationship outside of marriage between two people in a heterosexual way. All of that is a fulfillment of God's Word where it says they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, unbridled lust. And my heart goes out to people who sit there in the pew and, and hardly understand what is going on in great, historic denominations. It is time to earnestly contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. It's not grace. It's

disgrace. They've turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. Modern, post-modern theological thought has sabotaged the Bible, and humanized God, and deified man, and minimized sin, and glorified science, and glamorized sex. We're in a mess. Now notice their character. They're ungodly. Notice their conduct. They turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. And, by the way, every time you find an apostate, look long enough and you'll find some sexual sin there. Or if you find some sexual sin in an orthodox man, wait long enough and he will become apostate. The two go together.

C. Their Creed

Now, you see, you see their character and you see their conduct. And look at their creed. They are denying the only Lord God. They do this with their pseudo-science and, ah, their supplicated ignorance.

Now not only is it deadly and deceptive, but it is so dangerous. Look, if you will, in verse 5. Here's, here's the warning that Jude gives. "Now I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed that. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

1. They Were Destroyed in Spite of Their Profession

Now I want you to see how God destroyed these apostates in Jude's day; ultimately, eventually destroyed them. And, and listen very carefully. They were destroyed, first of all, in spite of their profession. Now he mentions here those in verse 5. The people came out of the land of Egypt, but they were afterward were destroyed in verse 5 because they believed not. Now that means what? It means they were in the company of the redeemed. They came out, ah, when God opened up the Red Sea. They came out the night of the Passover. They followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. They were in the company of the redeemed, but God destroyed them. These people didn't lose their salvation. They never had it. They had profession, but they did not have possession. They never truly believed.

2. They Were Destroyed in Spite of Their Position

Now not only were they destroyed in spite of their profession, but they were also destroyed in spite of their position. Look, if you will, in verse 6: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, hath, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Now what, what Jude is saying is don't think because you have a grand, exalted

position that you're immune to judgment. These were bright, shiny, shining, holy angels. They had places of authority, and yet they fell, and they were judged and destroyed.

You may be a pastor. You may be a deacon. You may be a teacher. You may be a seminary professor. But you could, you can become, in spite of your position, an apostate and be destroyed.

3. They Were Destroyed in Spite of Their Prosperity

But not only were they destroyed in spite of their profession and in spite of their position, but they were also destroyed in spite of their prosperity. Notice in verse 7: "Even Sodom and Gomorrha..." Now notice he says, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Now Sodom was exceedingly prosperous. If they'd had a Dow Jones, it would have been over nine thousand and headed for ten thousand. As a matter of fact, Ezekiel says this was the sin of thy sister Sodom, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, and, ah, they failed to strengthen the hands of the poor and the needy, and they were not ashamed at all when they committed abomination. But, and the Bible says that God took them away as He saw good. And the, and the idea is that everything was doing so wonderfully well when the fire fell on Sodom. God had to hasten Lot out of Sodom. And Sodom was destroyed with fire and brimstone.

Now God says in the passage that we have right here that He left Sodom with its smoking ruins as an example to those that should after live ungodly. Listen. It's set forth for an example, "...suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Don't we learn? Jesus said in John chapter 17 the last days are going to be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot. And all of the resurgence of, of sexual perversion is all rooted back in apostasy.

Did you know the reason that we've lost our moral consensus in America today? The reason that so many people are saying, "Well, whether the President is guilty, whether the President is innocent, what difference does it make?" Do you know what's wrong? We've gotten away from this Book. We've gotten away from this Book. And there are people, saying, "Well, you know, if, if, if he's committed, ah, adultery, that's none of our business. That's his own private life." Well, I want to tell you that White House is not his house. That's our house. And he works for us. We pay his salary. And, ah, what a man does who works for me in an office I supply him happens to be part of my business. Now, you say, "Well, you're saying he's guilty." I don't know whether he's guilty or not. But I'm saying anybody is silly who says, "So what?" We need to pray that the truth will out and that, ah, that, ah, the honor of, of, of just plain righteousness and holiness. Adultery and fornication is not a small matter, but it is, it is to an apostate. It is to an apostate.

We, in this nation, are in a serious, serious fight for the faith, a battle for the Bible,

even as the article that I read to you from the newspaper, last Saturday's Commercial Appeal says people like us are saying, "Hey, there ought to be room for us." Now before they were saying, "You ought to make room for us." And now we're the ones saying, "Hey, you ought to make room for us." We're the ones who, if we stand up for truth, will be called bigoted and intolerant. And the sin today is to call sin sin. That is the sin today. And the, and the, the worst thing that you could be called in today's society is intolerant. Now that's exactly what Jude said. He said, "I wanted just to talk about salvation, but," he said, "it became, it became needful for me to exhort you, that you should earnestly contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. Now they were destroyed in spite of their profession, in spite of their position, in spite of their prosperity."

Conclusion

Well, what should we do? Let me suggest to you six things, and I'm just going to tick them off and then we'll be finished.

A. Study the Faith

First of all, you should study the faith. You should know what the faith is. He doesn't say a faith. He said we should earnestly contend for the faith. Now you can't defend or contend for anything you don't understand.

One lady was asked, "What do you believe?" She said, "Well, I believe what my church believes." "What does your church believe?" "Well, my church believes what I believe." "Well, what do you both believe?" "Well, we both believe the same thing."

B. Submit to the Faith

You should study the faith. Know what you believe. Not only should you study the faith, but you should submit to the faith. And that means crowning Jesus Christ as Lord. It means being born again. It means saying that the Bible is our guide for rule, for practice, for faith, the rule of faith and practice.

C. Show the Faith

But not only should you study the faith and submit to the faith, you need to show the faith. You know, the best argument for what we believe is not Adrian in this pulpit; it is you tomorrow morning in your office. You need to live this faith. You need to show it. I've often said the best argument for Christianity and, and the best argument against Christianity is the life of a Christian. Study the faith. Submit to the faith. Show the faith.

D. Stand for the Faith

Stand for the faith. Contend for it. I've heard people say, "Well, you don't have to defend the Bible. The Bible will defend itself." Well, that, no, you defend the Word of God. Stand up for the truth. Stand up for the Lord Jesus. Get a bulldog grip on the truth and

refuse to let go. Stand for the faith.

E. Support the Faith

Next, support the faith. Do you know what's wrong in America today? We have a lot of people who are going to churches, listening to messages. They know they don't agree with it, but they're loyal to that church, so they stay there. That's sad. Good people ought to line up with truth. We don't need more churches; we need better churches. We need for God's people to stand up. Our prayers, our money, our time, our talents all need to be lined up behind the Word of God. We need to get serious about thing. We're not playing games. It's not a matter of sentiment. Somebody says, "Well, grandma's buried in the backyard of this old church." Well, grandma would get up leave if she could, I'll guarantee you. Line up behind. And I'm not just, I'm not just talking about Bellevue. I'm just saying that good people need to put their lives, their prayers, their talent, their money behind Bible-believing, gospel-preaching churches. Say enough is enough of this other stuff.

F. Share the Faith

Then we need to share the faith. That's the last thing. Once you study the faith and submit to the faith and show the faith and stand for the faith and support the faith, then share it. Tell others. Bring people to Jesus Christ. Do you know the real proof that you really believe the Bible is the Word of God? It's not when you say amen when I preach. It's when you share it with somebody else.

I mean, in the news, I've been listening to the news lately. They think they may have a, a cure, or at least some kind of a cure, for cancer. Well, if that is true, I'll guarantee you it'll go across America like a wildfire. Isn't that, isn't that true? I have some precious friends right now who are suffering for, from cancer. And it would be a thrill for me to know that there is some kind of a cure. And, ah, friend, we, we've got the Word of God, and you need to share the faith. If you can't give it away, maybe you ought to give it up! I don't think you have the real thing.

So, let this little Book of Jude. Read the whole book. Let God speak to you. And I don't mean for us to be arrogant, like we're the only ones in the world who know the truth. But, folks, there's a battle for the Bible. There's a fight for the faith. And it'll be a fight to the finish till Jesus comes with no holes barred. If you're looking for a cheap way, an easy way, a lazy way to serve God, forget it. We're in a battle. And Satan is like a cornered animal, and he knows he has but a little time. And you'd better get into this book and know what you believe and don't let go.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, thank You for this time tonight in Your Word, and, Lord, for these truths that, ah, that we've been reminded of anew and afresh. Lord, help us, help me, help all of us, help our church, help these men from the Stephen

Oxford Institute on Biblical Preaching, help every one of us, Lord, to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. In Jesus' holy name, amen.

Dreams That Never Come True

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: March 3, 1985

Main Scripture Text: Jude 1:3–8

*“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh,
despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.”*

JUDE 1:8

Outline

Introduction

- I. Apostates Defile the Flesh
- II. Apostates Despise the Father
- III. Apostates Disgrace the Faithful

Conclusion

Introduction

We’re talking today in our continuing series in the Book of Jude under the general heading of “A Handbook for Survival,” and we are looking today at the verse that we’ve come to, which is verse 8. Now, we’re going to read this one verse, but later on, we will refer to a lot of verses around it, so keep your Bibles open to Jude—just one chapter, the only chapter there is—and verse 8: *“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities”* (Jude 1:8). I’m going to speak to you today on this subject: “Dreams that Never Come True”—“Dreams that Never Come True.”

Now, General William Booth was the founder of the Salvation Army. He was a great and a godly man, but he had good insight. And, General Booth thought about the time in which we’re living, and General Booth said that the great danger of the Twentieth Century will be—are you ready for this?—religion without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, Heaven without Hell. Now, he said that’s the state that the Church will come to. He was talking there about the apostasy that was going to come. It was the same apostasy that Jude warned us about when he said here in verse 4: *“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness”—*that means “unbridled lusts”—*“and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Jude 1:4).

Now, look, if you will, at verse 4 again. The Bible says that these “men crept in”

(Jude 1:4). That is, they just slipped in so stealthily; they slipped into the Church of God. This same word that is here in our English Bible was used in Greek language years ago to describe a number of things. I've already told you it describes somebody who could slip into water without making a ripple, like a crocodile slithering off the bank. It speaks of a person who had been exiled from a country, who slipped back in across the line. He comes back in and repatriates himself, coming over back into the country, across the boundaries—illegally coming back in, a banished criminal. It speaks of a lawyer who, in a very clever way, in an argument, just slips a thought in, slips a word in—nobody pays much attention to it at that particular time, but he's so clever that he knows he's going to come back later and make a tremendous case on that thing that he just slipped in very carefully. It speaks of somebody who slips in the side door when there's a gathering—he's not invited; he doesn't have credentials; he doesn't come in the main door, but when the side door is open, he slips in.

Now, that's the way liberalism is; that's the way apostasy is. And, by the way, what do we mean by the word *apostasy* that I'll be using very much in this message? The word *apostasy* means "to turn away or to fall away from the truth." Now, remember what an apostate is. An apostate is not somebody who is in a false cult. That's wrong, but that's not an apostate. An apostate is not somebody who is a sheer unbeliever. Unbelievers are lost, but that's not what an apostate is. An apostate is somebody who has received the truth and he has rejected the truth and now begins to ridicule the truth. That's what an apostate is. Now, an apostate is somebody who has, first of all, received the truth; then he has rejected the truth, and then he begins to ridicule the truth. And, he denies the only Lord God; he turns the grace of God into lasciviousness, and that's the thing that Jude is sounding the alarm about. Jude said, "I wanted to preach a gospel sermon, but the Holy Spirit wouldn't let me. The Holy Spirit told me that I should earnestly exhort you, that you should earnestly contend, agonize, for the faith that was once for all delivered unto the saints."

Now, in verse 8 we have another description of these apostates. In verse 8, they're called "*filthy dreamers*" (Jude 1:8). Now, why on earth would an apostate be called a "filthy dreamer"? Does that mean that he had a bad dream one night? No, that's not what it's talking about; it's not talking about that kind of a dream. He's talking here about a vision—a conjecture, an imagination, something that he dreamed up. You see, in the Book of Jude, there's a contract that is given. For example, in verse 3, the Bible says we "*should earnestly contend for the faith [that] was once [for all] delivered [to] the saints*" (Jude 1:3). And, when he says, "*The faith [that] was once [for all] delivered [to] the saints*" (Jude 1:3)—look up there—he's talking about this, folks: the Bible, the faith, God's Word. This body of truth is called "the faith," and that's what we should contend for. There is a battle for the Bible; there is a fight for the faith. We should earnestly

contend for the faith.

Now, over and against the faith is what we called “the dreams” or “the imaginations” of men. This is not something that God has revealed; this is something they have dreamed up. That is, they had their own imaginations. They have their own intuition. They have their own subjective religion. They have their own ideas. They have their own existential ideas rather than the revealed Word of God. Now, Jude calls these people with their homemade religion, and their cooped up theology, and their philosophy—he calls them “filthy dreamers.”

I think you could understand a little better if we turned to an Old Testament passage. Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 13 for just a moment. That will be worth reading, worth turning to—the Book of Deuteronomy chapter 13. You’ll get the idea here a little more clearly. God says, *“If there arise among you”*—and, by the way, that’s the way prophets come; they just arise among you. God doesn’t anoint them, talking about false prophets now. That’s the way apostates come—*“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams”*—you know, you just wonder, “Where did that guy come from?”—*“and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass”*—he says, “It’s going to be this way,” and it happens just like he says. “Oh,” you say, “he must be of God.” You’d better be careful, friend. Listen—*“And the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams”*—now, just underscore that—“that dreamer of dreams”—*“for the LORD your God proveth you”*—that is, God’s putting you to a test—*“to know whether [you] love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments”*—and when He says, “His commandments,” He’s talking about His revealed Word, His inspired, inerrant, infallible *“faith [that] was once [for all] delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 1:3). You should keep His commandments and obey His voice. That is where God has spoken—*“and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put [away] the evil...from the midst of these”* (Deuteronomy 13:1–5). Way back here in the Book of Deuteronomy Moses was commanding them to *“earnestly contend for the faith”* (Jude 1:3).

Don’t let these dreamers—don’t let these people with their imaginations, their visions—take you away from the Word of God. What is the dream that he’s talking about? It is subjective religion that is not conformed to the Word of God. It is subjective religion that is not controlled by the Word of God. It is subjective religion that is not

confirmed in the Word of God. Now, Jude describes these filthy dreamers three ways.

I. Apostates Defile the Flesh

First of all, he says that they “*defile the flesh*” (Jude 1:8). Do you see that? Let me tell you something about apostates: apostates generally go into deep sexual sin or some kind of fleshly indulgence and immorality. An unbeliever may not believe the gospel, but he’ll normally be a pretty moral person. Well, not always—but he can be a very... You know, there are a lot of nice folks who are lost. Isn’t that true? I mean, they may be next-door neighbors. They’re happily married. They don’t run around on their wives. They pay their bills. They’re just lost; they don’t know the Lord, and we have to feel sorry for them. But, that’s not an apostate.

You’re going to find out that an apostate goes into sexual sin or some other kind of immorality. The Bible says that he “*[defiles] the flesh*” (Jude 1:8). And, in the verse just above verse 8, remember, he’s been talking about Sodom and Gomorrah, “*going after strange flesh*” and “*giving themselves over to fornication*” (Jude 1:7). And then, he says, “*Likewise*”—and he’s just referring back to verse 7—“*Likewise...these filthy dreamers*” (Jude 1:8). That’s the reason he calls them “filthy dreamers.” The word *filthy* is not there in the original, but it fits—it fits. It’s in italics in the King James Version of the Scripture, because he’s talking about these people who go into sexual immorality.

Why would an apostate be more prone to sexual immorality or to some sort of sensuous sin than an ordinary unbeliever? Now, remember what an apostate is? An apostate is somebody who has received the truth, rejected the truth, and now ridicules the truth. Why is he more susceptible to that kind of sin? I’ll tell you why—because he has willingly and deliberately sinned; he has committed soul suicide, and he’s kicked his conscience to death. And, he has lost his morals because he’s lost his moorings. He no longer has the Word of God. And, the Bible tells us that he’s like a sow that was taken from the mire and washed and then he goes back, or he’s like a dog who returns to his own vomit (2 Peter 2:22). And then, the Bible says—listen to it—his “*latter end is worse...than [his first]*” (2 Peter 2:20). He’s worse off than if he’d never heard the gospel. “[*His*] *latter end is worse...than [his first]*” (2 Peter 2:20). He is worse than an unbeliever. The Bible says, “It had been good for him if he had never known the truth than having known it to turn from the Holy Commandments” (2 Peter 2:21), because something happens to an apostate.

And, by the way, you find a boy or girl who goes off to college, and he’ll come back and he’ll get in that environment—and he’s never been saved, but he’s been raised in a Bible-preaching church; but he’s never been saved. He may have sung in the choir, may have been in Sunday School, may have played on the basketball team, may have led in the youth fellowship, but he has never really made Jesus Christ Lord of his life.

He has received the truth, but he's never been born again, never been saved—he'll go off to college somewhere, get in that fast crowd, and it will start with drugs. Or, he'll get into fornication, get into beer parties. You know, there's no restraint there; and so, he doesn't have the Holy Spirit in him. And then, at the same time, he'll get caught up in liberal religion. And, some professor will ridicule the Bible, and that finds a spark there in his life. And, after all, he's got an ungodly lifestyle, or he wants to get into an ungodly lifestyle. That boy, that girl, will come back and will say, "Mom and Dad, I don't believe what you folks believe. I don't believe what the pastor preaches up there anymore. I don't believe this anymore." And, I'll tell you, almost every time you find a college student who comes back that way—you find a college student who is living in deep sexual or alcoholic type of sin, or drugs, or some kind of debauchery that has gotten hold of the flesh. There's something about it, dear friend; these sins are linked together—apostasy and sexual license. An apostate defiles the flesh. It is an amazing thing how people who have been in religion, when they turn from religion, they turn to sexual sins.

I clipped this out of our newspaper the other day. It's one of our local columnists. He went down to New Orleans during Mardi Gras. He's describing Mardi Gras. He said, "It's a curious thing to an outsider to see this revelry, this spectacle, this wild press of people. Here under the banners of ancient gods such as Bacchus"—do you know who Bacchus is—the pagan god of wine?—"and Isis"—an Egyptian deity of darkness—"they celebrate their human half, the darker side of their nature. Here wine literally flows. The streets reek with the fermented sop and trashcans bearing oyster shucks. And, other restaurant scraps line the curve, carrying for the destitute"—now, listen to this—"Here between Christianity and paganism, affluence and want, boils something of the human spirit. Here, emboldened by alcohol, the masses—they shout back in the face of the street preacher, 'Be gone!'"—that is, they don't want to hear this man preach—"And, if they feel guilty later, well, at least it is later. But, here all things are suspended—pain, guilt, conscience—in favor of the more pleasant pursuits of drink and sex. A strong undercurrent of sex pervades the entire carnival"—and I'm going to come back to the word *carnival* in just a moment—"Women don garter belts and expose their breasts. Men parade in masks of leather and masks of demons, their feral tongues extended. For this is, after all, the celebration of the arrival of spring, a return to fertility, after a winter's pause. Yet it is also the beginning of Lent, the celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ. And, these two dwell side-by-side, a curious co-existence. It is a contradiction, as New Orleans itself, a testament to these misplaced Frenchmen and their zest for living."

Now, I'm not here to pick on New Orleans, but let's think about Mardi Gras. Do you know what *Mardi Gras* means? *Mardi Gras* means "Fat Tuesday." Why do they call it

“Fat Tuesday”? Because it comes before Ash Wednesday. What is Ash Wednesday? The beginning of Lent. This is a time where we’re supposed to get ready for the holy season of Easter. “Well” people said, “if we’re going to have to spend all that time getting ready for Easter, don’t you think we ought to have a big time before we do it? Don’t you think we ought to have a Fat Tuesday before we have an Ash Wednesday? Don’t you think we ought to have a carnival?” Do you know what the word *carnival* means? “Farewell to the flesh.” *Carnas* is the word *flesh*. When we have a valedictory—that is, to say goodbye—“Carni-val.” Put those two words together, and you’ve got it—“farewell to the flesh.” That is, “for a certain number of days, we’re going to have to say goodbye to this old flesh. So, we’re going to eat, and we’re going to drink, and we’re going to fornicate, and we’re going to booze, and we’re going to dance, and we’re going to take drugs, all in the name of Christianity.” Friend, it had its beginnings in Christianity—that debauchery, that worshipping of pagan gods. And, they literally worshipped these gods; they’re made up like these gods. They name these parades and floats after these gods—pagan gods! And, it all started in Christianity.

That’s what apostasy does. As people get away from the Word of God, as they get their imaginations, and their dreams, and the tradition of the Church rather than the Word of God—filthy dreamers, filthy dreamers—they defile the flesh. And, sooner or later, you watch every apostate, and there will be that sexual, or fleshly, or sensual sin that is there. That’s one of the marks.

II. Apostates Despise the Father

Second mark of an apostate—not only do they defile the flesh; they also despise the Father. Now, here in Jude it says, “[*They*] *despise dominion*” (Jude 1:8). Now, what does he mean by *dominion*? Well, who is dominion, or what is dominion? Look in verse 25 here: “*To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty*”—what’s the next word?—“*dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen*” (Jude 1:25). When they despise dominion, they despise the only wise God who alone has that dominion. You see, an apostate literally hates God. Look in the last part of verse 4: “[*They deny*] *the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Jude 1:4).

Now, I want to remind you, these are not deniers of God outside the Church. These are deniers of God inside the Church. These are people who despise dominion, who sit on church pews, who teach in seminaries, who teach in Bible colleges—they despise dominion. That is, they are rebels at heart. They don’t want anybody to box them in. Their battle cry is, “Freedom! Liberty!” They don’t want anybody to tell them what they must believe or how they must behave. They despise dominion. Now, I want to tell you, dear friend, anarchy and apostasy are Siamese twins. Rebellion is in the heart of the apostate. That’s what makes him an apostate; it’s the same thing that made the devil

the devil to begin with.

Now again, in our newspaper, I clipped this out. Here's a picture of some Japanese policemen. These Japanese policemen are searching the candy counters, and it says, "Seeking Deadly Candy—Japanese police check candy at a supermarket after nine packages of sweets carrying threatening messages were found in Tokyo and Negoya. Five were laced with cyanide. Police said that the deadly candy was placed by a gang of extortionists calling itself 'man with twenty-one faces.' At least 30 food firms have been threatened since last year." You say, "Pastor, that's terrible. You mean, when you go to the supermarket and you're going to buy something to tickle your palate, you're going to buy some candy—and you put your money down, and you're buying cyanide, and you don't even know it, and you take it and eat it? That's terrible." Well, it is terrible. But, I'll tell you something more terrible—for a person to come to a church, sit there, and put his money in the offering plate, and have poison peddled from the pulpit.

Right under that story, "Seeking Deadly Candy," is another story. That's the reason why I clipped this. Now, I don't think the editor put these two together on purpose, but it says, "Bible Stories or Gospel—Church Searches Its Soul. London Associated Press: The Church of England's ruling synod searched its collective soul in public yesterday, prompted by a Bishop's statements that cast doubt on the literal truth of the virgin birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ." Now listen—this is a bishop. He's no little fellow. This is a high muckety-muck who said this. The troublesome bishop, a former professor of theology—you'd believe that, too, wouldn't you? He's a professor, and he's teaching others. Listen to this: he provoked an uproar last April by saying on a television program that the traditional account of the resurrection—reduced it to a (I'm quoting now) "conjuring trick with bones." He declared that Christians are not obliged to believe that Jesus was divine. Of the virgin birth, he said, "I'm pretty clear it is a story told after the event in order to express and symbolize a faith that this Jesus was a unique event from God." That is, "It's just a lie; somebody made it up." He has since made it clear that he will continue to say "excitable things. That is exactly what is Jesus used to do, so I couldn't have a better example to follow." In other words, he's saying that "Jesus was a heretic just like me." Now listen, the Reverend David Holloway, who led a group of evangelical clergymen to demand that they describe Bishop Jenkins's view as 'a cancer that would gradually strangle the Church,'" or, I might say, he could describe it as candy on the shelf laced with cyanide.

Now, listen to this—I want you to hear what the archbishop had to say. You'd think the archbishop would step in, wouldn't you? But, listen to what he said: "But the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Rumsey, reminded the synod that Anglicans enjoy intellectual freedom and independence." Now, suppose the Tokyo police here said, "Let's do something about this candy," and they come to the chief of police and he says,

“Now, wait a minute. The people in Japan—they enjoy gourmet freedom. Don’t take that away. I mean, people are free to eat what they want to eat. And, if they want to eat candy, it’s not our job to take the cyanide off the shelf.” Dear friend, how ridiculous could the people of the Church be? They’re not even as smart as the children of light who know what to do. Now, the point I’m trying to make is they despise dominion. You see, this archbishop went on to say that “the Church is not like a schoolteacher who must expel a boy from school lest he influence the others with his wickedness.” That is, they just despise dominion. They don’t want anybody to say, “This is the Word of God; this is what you must believe.” They don’t want shackles put upon them. And, you’re going to find out that every liberal and every apostate is a person who is a rebel.

And, by the way, you’re going to find them generally in rebellious movements. If they’re a movement to overthrow the United States, you look and there be some apostate clergymen out there leading it. If there is any kind of a rebellious movement, they despise dominion. It is built in. That’s what makes them apostates to begin with. Number one: They defile the flesh. Number two: They despise the Father, because the Father is dominion.

III. Apostates Disgrace the Faithful

The third thing they do is they disgrace the faithful. Notice again in verse 8: “[they] speak evil of dignities” (Jude 1:8). Now, this word *dignities* is the word we get our word *doxology* from. *Doxa*—it literally means “glories” or “glorious things, majesties.” That is, there is nothing too glorious, nothing too holy that they will not ridicule, they will not defame, they will not disgrace, they will not deride. You’re going to find out that, first of all, they receive the truth. Then they refuse the truth or repudiate the truth, and then they ridicule the truth. You find that with this bishop that I just read about who called the resurrection a trick with bones. You see, they have a way of speaking evil of glorious things.

Now, most likely what he’s talking about here—there were some people there who were ridiculing and blaspheming the doctrine of angels. Those were the glorious things that they were ridiculing back here in the Book of Jude. But, you’ll find this about an apostate: he has a quick lip. He knows how to ridicule holy things, and he’s not ashamed to speak about holy things. There’s nothing too sacred or too holy for him to revile and ridicule, and he doesn’t do it from outside the Church. He does it from inside the Church. You might put in your margin “2 Peter 2, verses 10 and 11”: Peter talks about God’s judgment on these false prophets, and he says, “*But chiefly them that walk after the flesh*”—we’ve already talked about that—“*in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government*”—now, we also talked about that. You see, it follows. Peter and Jude are just neck in neck—“*Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to*

speaking evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord” (2 Peter 2:10–11).

Now, what does that mean? Well, look in verse 9 of Jude now: *“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke [you]” (Jude 1:9).* Now, what happened was this: there was an argument about the body of Moses. Now, you know that Moses died prematurely on Mount Nebo. As a matter of fact, God took Moses’s life. Moses committed the sin unto death, and Moses died as a young man—at least, while his strength was there. The Bible says, *“His eye was not dim, [neither was] his [strength] abated” (Deuteronomy 34:7).* But, because of his transgression against God, he died on Mount Nebo. Now, he was a saved man, but he died there on Mount Nebo. He died prematurely; he died before he should. Now, Moses was all alone. And, the Bible says that nobody even knows where Moses is buried.

So, who buried Moses? Well, we don’t know. Perhaps it was Michael the archangel. God sent him down there to perform the funeral and to preach the funeral sermon. Now, Michael went down there. Now, all of this is supposition; we really don’t know. I’m just saying this is what could have happened. I don’t know. But, we know this—that Moses died. Nobody knows his burial place. And, we know at one time there was a great argument between Michael the archangel, not an archangel. People talk about the archangels—there’s only one, Michael the archangel, whose name means “Who is like God?”—a mighty angel. And, here’s the archangel, and here is Lucifer; here’s the devil. They’re in an argument. Now, remember that Michael has truth, and God, and righteousness on his side. And, here’s the devil over here. Do you think that Michael reads the devil “the Riot Act”? Do you think that Michael speaks disrespectfully to the devil? He does not. The Bible says, *“He dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil, but Michael said to the devil with all somberness, and all seriousness, and all authority—but he said it in a dignified way—‘The Lord rebuke you’” (Jude 1:9).* And, the battle was won.

Why did Jude bring that up? Listen, Jude was saying that an angel—the mightiest angel in all the glory—spoke more respectfully about the devil than some of these people speak about God. That’s what he’s saying. When even Michael the archangel wouldn’t bring a railing accusation against the devil, some of these people speak so blasphemously against Almighty God! And, their tongue walks up and down the earth, and you’ll find it follows as night follows day that when a man receives the truth, refuses the truth, he begins to ridicule the truth. He gives himself over to the flesh. He despises the authority of God; and in his tongue and in his mouth, he begins to speak blasphemous things. It is a terrible, horrible thing that happens. Some people are more careless about holy things than the archangel was when he was rebuking the devil.

Conclusion

Think about it. The Bible calls these people, these apostates, “*filthy dreamers*” (Jude 1:8). And, ladies and gentlemen, the world is full of them.

Snakes in the Garden

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: March 10, 1985

Main Scripture Text: Jude 1:11

“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.”

JUDE 1:11

Outline

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Introduction

Take your Bibles and turn, if you will, to the Book of Jude. It is next to the last book in the Bible—a very small book, and only 25 verses. Today, we’re going to read verse 11. The title of the message is “Snakes in the Garden”: *“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core”* (Jude 1:11). What a verse this is—properly understood—because, here, we have the marks of an apostate.

I found this in a clipping the other day. Poisonous snakes have different colors. And it tells how can you tell if a snake is poisonous. So if you don’t get anything from the message, maybe you can learn something from this. In North America, there are three general types of venomous snakes, which are not difficult to recognize. These are the copperheads, and cottonmouths, the coral snakes, and rattlesnakes.

The eastern coral snake is found from North Carolina to Texas; the western coral snake—in Arizona. The coral snake’s coloring gives a good clue it is poisonous. Any shiny snake patterned with rings of red, yellow, and black is suspect. The red rings are bordered with yellow. When I was a Boy Scout, we had a little poem: “Red and yellow—kill a fellow; red and black—friend of Jack.” Because, it is the scarlet king snake that is like a coral snake. And so all you have to do is remember that poetry, okay? Next time you see one, just pick it up, and say a poem.

All right now, then, there are 15 kinds of rattlesnakes of various sizes and colors in the United States and Canada. All of them have rattles at the tips of their tails. The

rattle is made up of dry, horny rings of skin that lock loosely onto one another. When the snake shakes its tail, as it does when excited, these horned pieces of skin rub against one another. This results in a rasping or buzzing sound; it serves to warn other animals that might be getting too close. Copperheads and cottonmouths have no rattles. A copperhead may be recognized by its brown, hourglass-shaped rings. A cottonmouth has a similar pattern, but the markings may become dim as the snake ages, so you'll have to pick it up and look closely to tell here. All right?

Cottonmouths are found in the southeastern United States, as far north as Virginia, and as far west as Texas. Copperheads are also found in the southeastern United States. So that tells how to recognize a snake, in case you want to cut his tail off right behind the ears. And I know that some of you will take great joy in doing that.

One man told me—he said, “The only two kinds of snakes I’m afraid of—one is a dead one; the other is a live one.” And maybe you can identify with that. But it’s important, if you lived in a house that had a beautiful garden, and you had some children, and you knew that there were certain kinds of poisonous snakes that might be in that garden—wouldn’t it be important for you to teach your children how to recognize it? Well, sure it would.

We sang in the 9:30 service, this morning, “I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses.” That sounds beautiful, doesn’t it? But what if there are snakes in the garden? Would you not want to teach your children—not only about the roses, and the dew, and the bluebirds, and the flowers, and the grass—wouldn’t you also want to warn them about the serpent? Wouldn’t—if there’s a snake in the garden, or the possibility of a snake in the garden—wouldn’t you want to point out the marks of that serpent?

Now in a sense, an apostate is a snake in the garden of God. He is one who has slithered in. The Bible says they “*crept in unawares*” (Jude 1:4). They just slither through the grass, but they are full of deadly venom and poison. And the Book of Jude deals with apostasy. Now what is an apostate? An apostate is not just an unbeliever; he’s lost, but he’s not an apostate—not in the classic definition of the word.

Or, an apostate is not somebody who is in a false cult. Now these are wrong, unless they get saved, of course; they’re eternally lost. But they’re not necessarily apostates. They’re heretics, but not necessarily apostates. What is an apostate? The word *apostasy* means, “to fall away.” That is, these are people who have once received the truth—they knew the truth—but then, not only have they received the truth; they reject the truth. And then, after a while, they begin to ridicule the truth. And Jude tells us how they ridicule the truth. But they’re not content, until they try to replace the truth.

And the devil has tried to destroy the Church by several ways. First of all, in the infancy of the Church, the devil tried to destroy the Church through persecution. He may

try that again, someday. But he thought, “Well, I’ll just persecute these Christians, and that’ll be the end of the Church.” But he found out that, in trying to stamp out the fire, he just scattered the embers. And it has been said that, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” And from outward persecution, the Church grew vigorous, and it grew. So the ol’ devil said, “Well, if I can’t destroy them from without, I’ll destroy them from within. I will infiltrate the Church, and I will do with infiltration what I could not do with persecution. And I will bring false doctrine into the Church. I will bring apostasy into the Church.” And that’s the reason we have the Book of Jude: to warn us against this apostasy in the last days.

Now just as you need to learn the marks of poisonous snakes, you need to learn the marks of apostasy. As a matter of fact, just put in your margin there “Romans chapter 16, verse 17,” and let me read that to you. Now the Apostle Paul says, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*” (Romans 16:17). Do you know what the word *doctrine* means?

A Sunday School teacher asked a little boy—she said, “Do you know what false doctrine is?” He said, “Yeah, that’s when doctors give people the wrong stuff when they’re sick, and they die.” That’s false doctrine, all right. And a lot of people get the wrong stuff, and they do die.

But the word *doctrine*, here, means, “teaching”—“teaching.” He says, “Now listen. Mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them.” They’re more dangerous than a serpent in the garden. I mean, a physical serpent can only take away your physical life; but apostasy can damn you forever.

So we need to learn the dangers of apostasy, the marks of an apostate. The Book of Jude says they’re like three men. The first man he mentions is Cain. And in verse 11, he warns us of the way of Cain. And then, the second man that he mentions is Balaam. And he speaks of the error of Balaam. The third man that he mentions is a man named Core. It’s spelled C-o-r-e in the New Testament, in the King James; it’s spelled K-o-r-a-h in the Old Testament. But Core and these are three snakes in God’s garden, and you need to learn their marks. You need to see what are the marks of an apostate. You need to be able to identify these poisonous theological reptiles. I want you to know their marks. Paul said, “Mark them, and avoid them” (Romans 16:17). Stay away from them; understand what they are.

I. The Way of Cain

Now the very first one he mentions is Cain. And Cain represents the apostate who would pervert the gospel—who would pervert the gospel. Turn, if you will, please, to the

Book of Genesis, and let's find the story of Cain. Turn to Genesis chapter 4, and you're going to find it right there. Look with me, in Genesis chapter 4, beginning in verse 1: *"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell"* (Genesis 4:1–5).

Now this is the story of two brothers. It is the story of two offerings. It is the story of two religions. It is the story of two destinies. Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Let's start with Abel first. Abel came to make an offering to the Lord. Now Abel was a shepherd; he was a keeper of flocks. And he took a little lamb out of that flock, of the firstlings of the flock, the fat thereof—that is, it was the very best, the little spotless lamb—and, that lamb was slain. And Abel offered to God a bloody sacrifice; the blood of a lamb was offered to God. And the Bible says that God had respect unto that offering.

Why did God have respect unto that offering? Because, here in the dawn of civilization, God was teaching a lesson; and, that lesson was this, ladies and gentlemen: Hebrews 9, verse 22. Mark it down; write it down, choir; write it down, people—Hebrews 9, verse 22: *"Without shedding of blood is no remission"* (Hebrews 9:22). Never has a sin been forgiven, apart from the shedding of blood. *"Without shedding of blood is no remission."* Now that's the reason the Bible says, in 1 John chapter 1 and verse 7: *"And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). We are saved—we are cleansed—by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His blood upon the cross is what Abel's lamb pictured, so long ago. But what about Cain? How did Cain feel about this kind of salvation? How did Cain feel about the blood of a lamb? He wasn't impressed with it, because the Bible says he made an offering, also. And let's look at the offering that he made, in verse 3: *"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD"* (Genesis 4:3).

Now remember, he was a farmer—probably a good one. And so he's going to make an offering to the Lord. And he takes the most succulent fruit; he takes the ripest grain; he takes the sweet-smelling herb; he takes beautiful flowers—and why, I imagine it was very impressive. It looked like a county fair. But God wasn't impressed. The Bible says that God did not have respect unto that offering; God did not receive that offering. Why? Because, it represented the work of Cain's hands. Cain was offering the work of his hands.

You see, he had grown this out of the ground, but God said, "Cursed is the ground;

in the sweat of your face, you're going to grow things out of the ground—you're going to earn your living" (Genesis 3:17–19). And here, this offering represented Cain's sweat—his toil—and he's bringing to God that which God says has a curse upon it, and he's offering it to the Lord. And God does not accept that kind of religion.

Now listen to me. What does that represent? It represents the apostate who does not preach the cross of Christ and the blood of Christ. He has gone the way of Cain. Listen well. There are only two religions in the world—not three, not four; but two. "Can you name them, Pastor?" Yes, I can: the true and the false. That's all—just two religions in the world. Now we like to divide religion up into Confucianism, Mohammedism, Rheumatism, Christianity... We like to put them in all kinds of different categories. We even like to take Christianity and subdivide Christianity: Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Catholics, and so forth. But I want to tell you, dear friend, when you get down to the bottom line, there are only two religions—and that's the true religion and the false religion.

The true religion is represented by Abel. It is salvation by the blood. False religion is represented by Cain, the man who tries to get to Heaven by his own good works, and all for his own self-effort, to the Lord. There are only two religions: the way of Cain and the way of the cross—the way of Cain, and the way of the cross. The way of Cain leads to Hell; the way of the cross leads to Heaven. And it is as simple as that. "Without shedding of blood is no remission of sin" (Hebrews 9:22). The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

"Well," you say, "Pastor, you don't need to tell us that. I know that here, at Bellevue Church." I want to tell you—not with a sense of arrogance or pride, but with a broken heart—there are many churches in America that you may attend and never hear a message on the blood atonement, never hear a message on the cross, never hear a message on the fact that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scripture. "Well," you say, "Pastor, yes, but not us; we're fundamental; we believe those things; we're Baptists."

Well, I want to tell you, with a broken heart, what a Baptist professor has said. One of four Baptist professors in one of our seminaries—not Mid-America Seminary, but one of our Southern Baptist seminaries—and, I'm going to quote him verbatim out of a book that he's written, entitled, *The Death of Christ*, published by Broadman Press, in 1978. He said, "I believe it is unwise to seek for a necessity for the cross. It is quite possible to affirm and clarify the importance of the cross without speaking of it as a necessity." I go on to quote: "Men today cannot believe that vicarious punishment is either meaningful or moral." Do you know what *vicarious* means? That means, "substitutionary." When a person dies *vicariously* for another, it means he dies "in the place of that other." He says, "No illustration can be given so far as I can tell, which makes vicarious

punishment morally credible to men today. The stories of one soldier punished for another, a child punished for his brother, a man punished for his friend, may be morally praiseworthy, from the point of view of the substitute; but, they are never acceptable, from the point of view of the punisher. It always seems morally outrageous that any judge would require a substitute. However notable a substitute's acts might be, the judge's act seems despicable."

What's he saying? He is saying, "It doesn't make sense. It is morally outrageous that one could suffer in the place of another. I don't want the necessity of the cross that Christ had to die for our sins." That, my friend, is apostasy. That, my friend, is the way of Cain.

I wonder what the Apostle Paul would have to say about that. First Corinthians chapter 15, verse 3—Paul said, *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures"* (1 Corinthians 15:3). That's the way Paul felt about the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus. He died for our sins. I wonder how the grand prophet Isaiah would feel about it. Isaiah 53, verses 5 and 6: *"But he"—(Jesus)—"was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"* (Isaiah 53:5–6). Thank God for the vicarious, substitutionary, necessary death of the Lord Jesus upon the cross.

Now dear friend, we're not just talking about something that doesn't affect us; we're talking about something that is infiltrating the Church, and even the Southern Baptist Convention, from every area. And the Bible calls it here, in the Book of Jude, *"the way of Cain"* (Jude 1:11). It is those who pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now by the way, let me tell you something, friend: You'd better make certain that you're in the way of the cross, not in the way of Cain. God will not accept culture for Calvary. God will not accept the works of your hands. Your good deeds, your offerings, and all of the rest of it, must go home by the way of the cross. There's no other way but this.

*I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light,
If the way of the cross I miss.*

—JESSE B. POUNDS

I mean, the way of Cain leads straight to Hell; the way of the cross leads straight to Heaven.

*My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness.*

—EDWARD MOTE

That's all.

But the way of Cain does not believe that. And you will be amazed, in modern denominations today, where they no longer preach the vicarious, substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, for your sins, and my sins. Jude has warned us.

II. The Error of Balaam

Now he warns us of another man, another serpent in God's garden who has slithered in. Not only are there apostates who pervert the gospel, but there are the apostates who prostitute the gospel. And they are represented by Balaam.

Now who was Balaam? Balaam was an apostate prophet. You can find the story of Balaam in Numbers chapters 22 through 25 (Numbers 22–25). Because of the great volume of material, I do not have time to tell you all about Balaam. But let me just give you a synopsis of the story. There was a king named Balak, who was intimidated by the Jews. As they were coming out of the land of Egypt, he wanted something to happen to them. So he got to thinking, "Well, there's a prophet named Balaam, and everything that Balaam says seems to come to pass. I am going to hire Balaam to put a curse on the children of Israel." And so Balaam receives the message from Balak. And Balak says, "Hey, I'll give you a fee, if you'll just curse these Jews." "Why," Balaam said, "I can't curse them. Well, how can I curse God's people? I can't do that." And he sent them away. But he thought, "Boy, I really missed a handsome fee."

Well, the king of Balak—he thinks to himself, "Every man has his price." So what he did was just to up the ante, and throw in some fringe benefits, and a bigger salary; and he comes back to Balaam. Well, to shorten the story, Balaam wants that money. His palm itches so much, and he becomes so greedy, that he tells King Balak this: He says, "Well now, look, king," he said, "we can't curse them. But I can tell you how you can get them to curse themselves. Don't you have some good-looking Moabite girls over here?" He said, "What you need to do is just turn them into Playboy bunnies." And well, he didn't say it exactly that way. That's the original Hebrew, though. And he said, "You bring them over here, and put on a sensual feast, and you invite the Jewish young men there. And you let them just fellowship together. And before long, the Jewish boys will be committing fornication with those girls. And then, I won't have to curse them; you won't have to curse them; they will have cursed themselves. And God will curse them."

And that's exactly what happened. And the king of Moab got these girls, and they got into a sensual feast, and then into fornication, and God slew 24,000 of them as the curse of God came upon God's people. And by the way, let me say parenthetically, there are not enough demons in Hell, or out of Hell, to stop Bellevue Baptist Church by attacking from the outside; but, God knows that we can curse ourselves, if we take our eyes from our Lord and let the devil infiltrate. The devil can't curse us, but we can curse

ourselves.

Well, ol' Balaam typifies any apostate. Do you know apostates are always motivated by a sense of gain? They're into religion for what they can get out of it. And the Bible says that Balaam did this for reward (Jude 1:11). His motive is very clear. Peter talks about apostates and their guilt.

Here's a corresponding passage, in 2 Peter chapter 2, that you'll think you are reading the Book of Jude. Now don't turn to it, unless you are very quick with your fingers, 'cause we'll be right past it here, in a moment—2 Peter chapter 2, verses 1 through 3. Now let's tend to it: *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of"*—now listen to this next phrase in verse 3; it's very important—*"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you"* (2 Peter 2:1–3). A false prophet will make merchandise of you, because he's covetous; and, through covetousness, he will make merchandise of you.

Do you know what happened in our Southern Baptist Convention? When a preacher like myself, or some other preacher, preaches against the apostasy in the convention—some liberal professor—he'll turn on the word. And brother, I'll tell you, to try to hem up an apostate is like trying to hem up a snake in a barrel of oil. They are glib, and they use feigned words; they'll start talking about missions. And they'll start crying the crocodile tears. And they'll say, "Oh, don't say anything that's going to hurt our great world missionary enterprise." And with feigned words, they'll make merchandise of you.

How we need to be warned, because I'll tell you, the Book of Jude is not just what God has said, dear friend; it is what God is saying—and not what God is saying to all those folks out there; it's what God is saying to these folks right in here. You need to pay attention here to what Jude is talking about. Jude is warning us, on the one hand, of those who would pervert the gospel. He's warning us, on the other hand, of those who would prostitute the gospel. At anytime, any preacher—and anywhere—trims his message or alters his message for a sense of gain, he has the spirit of ol' Balaam. "Be careful what you say, Pastor. Some of the big givers in the church might not like it"—that's the spirit of Balaam.

I had a lady, one time, call me up, and she was a big giver in the church down in Florida. She said, "Preacher, were you preaching to me this morning?" I said, "Lady, I was just shooting down in the hole; if you're down in it, I can't help it."

I'm not saying the preacher ought not to be paid. He ought to be paid. Say *amen*. Sure, he ought to. The Bible says, *"They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel"* (1 Corinthians 9:14). And the Bible says that, *"For the labourer is worthy of his*

hire” (Luke 10:7). The Bible says, *“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn”* (Deuteronomy 25:4). The Bible says that, *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour”* (1 Timothy 5:17). But I’m saying that any man, any woman, anybody, any place, who alters the Word of God for any kind of advantage or gain has the spirit of apostasy in him. It’s apostasy; it’s what Balaam did for reward—he altered his message; he trimmed his message; and he corrupted his message, as a serpent in God’s garden. You need to learn the marks of one.

III. The Gainsaying of Korah

I’ll tell you the third thing, and I’ll be finished: Not only was there the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, but also, there was the gainsaying of Korah. And this represents not only those who would pervert the gospel, and those who would prostitute the gospel, but those who protest and would prohibit the gospel.

Turn with me, if you will please, to Numbers chapter 16, and you’ll find the story, here, of Korah. And it’s a very interesting story indeed—Numbers chapter 16, and I’m going to begin reading in verse 1: *“Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown.”*—high muckety mucks (that’s me that said that)—*“and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face”* (Numbers 16:1–4).

Now who was Korah? Well, Korah was an important man. He was a cousin of Moses. He was a prince in Israel, and he was a very important man. He got 200 and another 50 men with him, and he came in a protest rally against Moses. He said to Moses, “Moses, who do you think you are? Aaron, who do you think you are? Why are you lifting yourselves up above the rest of us? Don’t you know that you are no better than we are? Don’t you know that everybody is holy around here? Who do you think you are?” Well, who was Moses? Moses was God’s prophet. Who was Aaron? Aaron was God’s priest. And both of them were a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you remember that Moses said that, *“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet... like unto me”* (Deuteronomy 18:15). Moses was a type of Christ, and anybody who knows His Bible knows that Aaron, the high priest, is a type, or a picture, of the Lord Jesus, our great High Priest.

And what this man did was, number one, he rebelled against God’s prophetic message; and, number two, he rebelled against God’s priestly ministry. He really

rebelled against the Lord Jesus Christ in picture and in type. It was a rebellion against the Lord of Glory. Why? “Because we’ll not have this man to rule over us.” Every apostate is a rebel at heart. We’ve already learned that. And they rebelled against Moses. Moses knew what was going to happen. He knew how the wrath of God would burn against them. Moses, in empathy and awe, fell on his face in prayer before God. I wish I had time to spend more time, but I want to show you what happened to these people.

Turn to Numbers 16, and look, if you will, in verse 31; and, you’ll find out how God feels about Korah. Korah has brought his blasphemous accusation, and here’s what happens: *“And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense”* (Number 16:31–35).

Do you know what happened? Moses went to God about these apostates. God said, “Moses, back off; get away from them.” And there’s Korah in his house, and there’s a great jagged chasm that opens up in the earth—the earth opens up, and down goes Korah. Down goes his family; down goes his home and all that appertains. The earth closes back up and swallows them up. They went down alive into Hell—250 more standing around, gaping at that, and fire comes down out of Heaven and destroys.

Now God doesn’t do that to every apostate. Here, God was setting an example—like in the early Church, when Ananias and Sapphira told just a lie; and, in that first fellowship, God struck them dead. God doesn’t do that every time somebody tells a lie. God set the example the first time.

One preacher stood up and preached; he said, “Well, if God were to strike every liar dead, where would I be?” Everybody laughed. He said, “I’d be preaching to an empty congregation; that’s what it would be.”

God did that to begin with. He set the example. What I’m trying to say is that God—in the most violent, vivid way that could be shown—God is showing how He feels about apostasy.

Conclusion

Now we need to be warned, folks. We need to be warned. I am telling you that Cain represents those who pervert the gospel—a bloodless religion. Balaam represents these hustlers who prostitute the gospel; and there are plenty of them around. Korah

represents those who actually protest the gospel, shake their fist in the face of God, and say, “You can’t tell us how to worship You.” And they rebel against God’s prophet and against God’s perfect brothers and sisters in Jesus. How important it is that we know Christ in these days!

Now let me tell you what the real problem is. Are you listening? Many of you are saying, “So what. What’s he so excited about?” Two problems in America: number one, apostasy in the pulpit; number two, apathy in the pew. Now do you think God put this in the Book of Jude just to fill up space? No. Jude wanted to write about the gospel, but he said, “It became necessary for me to warn you to earnestly contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).

The Portrait of an Apostate

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: March 17, 1985

Main Scripture Text: Jude 1:12–13

“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

JUDE 1:12-13

Outline

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- A. The Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ
- B. The Full Deity of Jesus Christ
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- D. The Literal Second Coming of Jesus Christ
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- F. The Inerrancy of the Bible

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- A. He is Dangerous, like a Hidden Rock
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Introduction

Take your Bibles. Turn to the Book of Jude. It is next to the last book in the Bible, so it is easy to find. Find the Book of Revelation, and turn left, and you will come to it. It is very easy to find. But it is a small book. Be careful—you'll go right past it. Only 25 verses, but 25 pertinent and powerful verses that deal with the problem that we have today; it is the problem of apostasy. And we come, today, in our study, to Jude, verses 12 and 13.

Now here, Jude is describing an apostate. And he says, *“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame;*

wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 1:12–13).

What a poignant statement! What powerful verses these are! What Jude is doing here is giving us a portrait of an apostate.

I heard of a man, one time, who went into a bank to rob the bank. He took a note and shoved it to the teller, and it said, “This is a hold up. Put all of your money in this bag and send it back.” She took a pencil, and wrote a note to him, and shoved it back to him. And he read it. It said, “Straighten your tie, stupid; they are taking your picture.” Now why do they want a picture of a criminal? Why do the banks go to all the difficulty to take a photograph of a man who is doing a bank robbery? Well, that others might be warned. This man is dangerous. This man is a felon. This man is a criminal. And they take his picture. They’ll put it on television. They’ll put it in post offices and other places, that we might know what this criminal looks like.

Now there are some spiritual criminals. There are some spiritual felons. And what God has done here, in the Book of Jude, is to give us a portrait of an apostate. Now what is an apostate? An apostate is not merely someone who does not believe in the gospel—he is lost, but he is not an apostate; nor is an apostate somebody who is in some non-Christian religion, or somebody who is in one of the cults—they may be lost, but they are not apostates.

An *apostate*, if you will remember, means “someone who has turned from the truth.” The word *apostasy* means “to fall away from,” or, “to turn away from that which one has received.” So an apostate is someone who, first of all, has received the truth. Then, he has rejected the truth. Then, he starts to ridicule the truth. And finally, you are going to see he is not content until he tries to replace the truth.

Now don’t think that doesn’t have anything to do with you—indeed, it does, because the devil’s chief weapon against Bellevue Baptist Church would not be persecution from the outside, but he would try to infiltrate this church with apostasy. And the devil has infiltrated great denominations, and great institutions, and great churches with apostasy.

Now the devil is not primarily against religion. Huh? The devil is in favor of religion. It is one of his chief tools. It was a religious crowd that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. Most Americans don’t need religion. They need to turn from religion to Jesus Christ. But somehow we are all counted un-American if we don’t just put our arms around everybody else, and say, “Your religion is just as good as mine.” Well, in many ways, that may be true, because they are all no good. *It is not religion that saves; it is Christ that saves.* And Christianity is not just another religion—it is different; it is a vital relationship with the Son of God. But folks, I want to tell you, in these last days, apostasy is upon us.

Five hundred-and-twenty-one clergymen and laymen met in Miami Beach for the

National Council of Churches there, and they were having a general assembly. And somebody said, “Well, we’ll just survey these people and find out what they believe.” And they took a survey and found only a little more than half of them believed in the deity of Jesus Christ. I’m talking about religious leaders who have come together for convocation—barely more than 50% of them believed in the deity of Jesus Christ. Only 25% of them believed the miracles of the Bible. One-third of them declared, “The devil definitely doesn’t exist.” I’m talking about religious leaders. Sixty-two percent of them were only able to say that they looked forward to some kind of existence after death, some kind of a continuation after death. Only 62% believed that there was a life after this life. I’m talking about religious leaders, dear friend, who came together for convocation.

And you wonder why America is in the problem that America is in? *I really don’t believe there’s much wrong in America that could not be solved if we had a generation of old preachers who stood up and preached the Word of God*—I really believe that with all of my heart. And the Scriptures, here, sound an alarm. Jude, if you will remember, in his introduction, said, “I started to preach to you a gospel sermon. I was going to rejoice with you about our *“common salvation,”*—but, he said—*“it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 1:3).

And dear friends, there are two things you need to understand. First of all, those words *earnestly contend* are the words that we get our word *agonize* from. We are to agonize. There is a battle for the Bible. And dear friend, it is not always going to be like a Sunday School picnic. You are to agonize. And then, “the faith that was once delivered to the saints” literally means “the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” I told you before—I’ll tell you again: *If it’s new, it’s not true*. God has given us His Word. And the Bible says, when God does something that is perfect, you don’t add to it; you don’t take from it. And God says, if you add to it, He will add to you the plagues that are written in this book. If you take from it, God will take away your part out of the book of life, and the things that are written in this book (Revelation 22:18–19). We are to “earnestly contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).

I. The Battle for the Faith

Now there is a battle for this faith. When he says *the faith*, he is talking about that revealed body of truth that we call *the Bible*. But I want to give you six areas where the battle rages. And if you want not only to know what an apostate is like, but if you want to know what the faith is, let me give you six areas. And I just want to tick these off real quickly, and then we’ll get into the portrait of an apostate.

A. **The Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ**

The first area where there is a battle today is over the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some people who say, “Well, the virgin birth of Jesus doesn’t make that much difference.” I’ll tell you how much difference it makes: It makes the difference as to whether you are going to Heaven or Hell—that’s how much difference it makes. If Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin, He was not sinless. If Jesus Christ was not sinless, He could not die for your sins; He would have had to die for His own. If Jesus Christ could not die for your sins, there is no atonement. If there is no atonement, there is no new birth. If there is no new birth, there is no Heaven for you—only sure judgment. You take away the doctrine of the virgin birth, and the whole house of Christianity will collapse like a house of cards. But there are many, today—some of them, God help us, teaching in seminaries—who deny the miracle of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. **The Full Deity of Jesus Christ**

A second great truth that you need to get in your heart—and get it in, big and plain—is the full deity of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was not just a good man—not just a prophet, not just a great teacher. He was very God of very, very God. The Bible says, *“Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh”* (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus Christ was God. The Bible teaches very clearly, in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, that He is *“the mighty God”* (Isaiah 9:6). The liberal—the apostate—almost always denies the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. **The Substitutionary Blood Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ**

The third great truth where there is a battle today is over the blood atonement, the substitutionary blood atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is abhorrent to an apostate that Christ died for our sins. He may talk about the cross; he may talk about these things, but he does not believe them as the Bible teaches them—that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and, with His rich, red royal blood He cleanses us, for the Bible says, *“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7).

D. **The Literal Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

The next doctrine that the apostate does not like is the literal Second Coming of Jesus Christ—that Jesus Christ is actually, visibly, bodily coming back to this earth again. And friend, He is. The Lord Jesus said, *“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself”* (John 14:3). The angel said, *“This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11). *“This same Jesus...in like manner”*—just as we believe

in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

E. The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ

And did I mention that bodily resurrection? That's after the blood atonement—that Jesus Christ came out of that grave—actually, bodily. We believe in an empty tomb. And then, the sure return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

F. The Inerrancy of the Bible

And the next area of truth over which there is a battle is this Bible, the Word of God. We believe that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant, immutable, indisputable Word of God. We believe that, dear friend, it is “the faith once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). The apostate does not like that. Even the person in the false cult, many times, will have more respect for the Word of God than the apostate has for the Word of God.

And so these are the areas. This is where the battle is raging in these last days—a battle for the Bible. There is a fight for the faith. And Jude says, “We should agonize for God's Word.” And we should be warned. And there are some spiritual criminals whose posters need to be imprinted upon the corridors of our mind, so we'll know what they are like.

II. The Portrait of an Apostate

And so in verses 12 and 13, Jude tells us what an apostate is like. Again, he gives us “The Portrait of an Apostate.”

A. He is Dangerous, like a Hidden Rock

Now the very first thing he tells us about an apostate is that he is a dangerous person. He is dangerous, like a hidden rock.

Look in verse 12: “*These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear*” (Jude 1:12). Now look at the word *spots*. The word *spots* literally means “hidden rocks.” This word is only used once in the New Testament. But in other corresponding literature and in other literature, the word literally means “a reef, a sunken reef,” or, “a hidden rock.”

Those of you that have ever been out in a boat that has run aground will know something about what I'm talking about, now. Have you ever been in a boat that has run aground, hit a rock beneath the surface? You were going out fishing, and you have that outboard motor revved up. And it's going to be a wonderful day, and everybody is expecting a good time. And you're just running along—perhaps you have that throttle wide open, because you want to get to the fishing ground.

I'm thinking of an experience I've had very much just like this. And beneath the surface, there is a reef, a hidden rock. Everything looks fine on the surface; but

suddenly, the boat lunges. There is a horrible grinding sound; the motor kicks up. And the boat goes off to one side, and everything comes to a stop; and, water starts to come in, up around your feet. And you have ripped the belly of that boat open on some sunken rock. Now a charted rock—that is, on the charts, you can see—a rock that is sticking up out of the water, you can see. But a rock right beneath the surface, a sunken rock, what damage it does!

Now he says, “These are hidden rocks in your love feasts.” Now why does he put those two things together? Because, you see, the devil wants to destroy our fellowship. The devil wants to destroy our love. That early Church had a love feast very much like we are going to have at the Cook Convention Center. They would get together; they would have a fellowship meal. And what joy, and what happiness, and what peace they would have, as they would be fellowshiping together! But right beneath the surface would be some apostate, some person that is not right with God, some person who had slipped into the fellowship; and, some way, somehow, God’s old ship of Zion runs aground.

Something happens. There is a rending tear in the fellowship. There is a gaping wound in the side of the old ship of Zion, and the water begins to pour in. There is chaos and confusion. And where there was joy, and happiness, and peace, and victory, there is now division and despair, because the Church has run aground. The devil sits back, and he smiles, because he planted his apostate, his big rock, in the river of love. And the spiritual *love boat* goes down.

Now we need to be warned. How we need to protect our fellowship! And I want to tell you, dear sir—I want to tell you, madam—that you are never more like an apostate than when you damage the fellowship of a New Testament church. They are spots on your feasts of love, hidden rocks beneath the surface. And therefore, the first mark of an apostate is they are dangerous, dangerous, dangerous, like a big rock.

B. He is Deceptive, like a Waterless Cloud

But not only are they dangerous, like a hidden rock. They are also deceptive, like a waterless cloud. Look again in verse 12—he says, “*Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds*” (Jude 1:12).

Now you have to remember that Jude was not from the Mid-South, where you get more rain than you want, sometimes. He was from the Middle East, and a cloud was very important, because, when a cloud appeared in that land, it meant the promise of rain. And rain, during the rainy season, was so very, very vital.

But can you imagine a cloud forming on the horizon—a cloud boiling and billowing—a dark cloud? “Surely, a rain cloud is coming this way. There it is, Mother. There is going to be rain.” “Children, there is going to be rain. God is going to send rain.” And

then, that cloud just passes over. And there is wind, and there is vapor—but no rain.

Now Jude is using very strong language. For example, in verse 4, he says, “*There are certain men crept in unawares*” (Jude 1:4). I didn’t say it, but he said they were *creeps*. They creep in. But now, he is saying they are *windbags*. That’s what he means when he says, “They are waterless clouds”: just pompous windbags; that is, a lot of sound, a lot of fury, and a lot of motion; but there is nothing there, after it passes over. And that, my dear friend, is the shame of apostasy. The apostates promise much, but they deliver so little.

Years ago, I read a description by B. H. Carroll, one of our Baptist forefathers, as he talked about a drought in Texas. You know, it gets dry in Texas, sometimes. I got a letter from Texas the other day, and the stamp was put on with a safety pin. It gets dry in Texas. Here’s what B. H. Carroll said: “I have witnessed a drought in Texas. The earth was iron, the heavens—brass. Dust crowded the thoroughfares and choked the travelers. Watercourses ran dry. Grass scorched and crackled. Leaves twisted and withered. Stock died around the last water holes. The ground was cracked, and there were fissures in the earth. And the song of birds died out in their parched throats. Men despaired. The whole earth prayed, “Rain, rain, rain, rain; Heaven send rain.” Suddenly, a cloud rises above the horizon and floats into vision, like an angel of hope. It spread a cool shade over the burning and glowing earth. Expectation brings life to desire. The lowing herds look up. The shriveled flowers open their tiny cups. The leaves untwist and rustle with gladness. And just when all trusting, suffering life opens her confiding heart to the promise of relief, the cloud—the cheating cloud—like a heartless flirt, gathers her drapery about her, and floats scornfully away, leaving the angry sun free to dart his fires of death into the open heart of all suffering life.”

When I read that, I thought that’s what Jude is talking about right here. Clouds—they are flirting clouds, clouds without water. Friend, let me tell you, the apostates have plenty of clouds. I mean, they have their activities. They have their Sunday Schools. They have their church services. They have their conferences. They have their radio programs. They have their Bible studies. They have their magazines. They have their books. They have their tracts. They have their mission societies. They have their youth activities. But they don’t have any water of the Spirit. They don’t have any water of the gospel.

And people who come—do you know what the sad thing will be, dear friend? That this Sunday, in America, millions of people will go to church, sit and listen to a pompous windbag, who is a cloud without water; and, they will go away, still thirsting for the water of life, and many of them will not even know what they missed. Oh, it may be a dry and dull service, or it may be a service set on fire with satanic zeal. But there will be no glory there; there will be no Book there; there will be no blood there; and there will be no

salvation there; there will be no Holy Ghost there; there will be no revival there; there will be no victory there; there will be no new birth there; there will be no power there. Clouds they are—deceptive—clouds without water.

C. He is Dead, like a Fruitless Tree

My, how the wrath of God burns against the apostate! He is dangerous, like a sunken rock. He is deceptive, like a waterless cloud. The third thing Jude says about him is, “He’s dead, like a fruitless tree.”

Look again, if you will here, in verse 12: *“Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots”* (Jude 1:12). What does he mean by this? These are trees, but there is no fruit on them. You see, there is one thing that you can’t do with a dead tree—and that’s to get fruit from it.

There are a lot of things you can do with a dead tree: You can transplant a dead tree; you can move a dead tree from one church to another. One lady said, “Pastor, I’m going to move my membership from your church to another church.” He said, “Well go ahead. It won’t hurt you to change the labels on an empty bottle.”

You can transplant a tree, but it won’t give it life. You can prune a dead tree—that’s reformation—but you won’t have life. You can cultivate a dead tree. You can send it to worship services, and Bible studies, and all of the rest of it; but you can’t give it life, if it is dead. You can rename it. You can call it something else, if you want; but it is still dead. The best thing to do with a dead tree is to pluck it up and burn it. That’s what God is going to do.

“These are trees, twice dead,” he says. “They are fruitless; they are plucked up by the roots.” Jesus said, in John 15, that they are fit to be *“cast them into the fire, and they are burned”* (John 15:6), because they are twice dead.

Do you know what the first death is? The first death is when you die spiritually: *“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death”* (Revelation 20:14), the Bible tells us. That is the second death. And these trees are twice dead.

And by the way, listen to me, friend. Are you born again? You see, there are two births and two deaths. If you are not born twice, you’ll die twice. Born once—you’ll die twice. Born twice—you can only die once. You die physically, but you have, eternally, life with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now these are fruitless trees. Jesus said, *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain”* (John 15:16). An apostate has no fruit. An apostate cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit, nor bear it—Galatians 5, verse 22, where he speaks of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Therefore, the apostates cannot grow churches. Let me tell you about apostasy: Apostasy is a parasite. It can only pluck fruit and devour fruit that is

produced by Bible believers. And therefore, the apostates move into our churches; they move into our denominations. They have no power of themselves; they are dead trees. They cannot produce; they can only devour.

And so what does God say about an apostate? An apostate is dangerous, like a sunken rock. He'll wreck the fellowship. An apostate is deceptive, like a waterless cloud. He promises much, but he delivers little. An apostate is dead, like a fruitless tree: fit only to be plucked up and to be burned.

D. He is Disturbed, like Wild Waves of the Sea

Now let me say, fourthly, an apostate is disturbed, like wild waves of the sea. Look in verse 13: *"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame"* (Jude 1:13). Underscore that phrase, "their own shame." But let me tell you what that is talking about:

The ocean, when it is calm, gets very clear. But when a storm comes, and the ocean begins to seethe and to boil, off of the bottom of the ocean floor, from the silt, comes all manner of evil, and seaweed, and filth, and foam, and all of these things that after a storm, these things are left upon the beach. I was raised in West Palm Beach, Florida. My brother and I used to love to go to the seashore and go beachcombing after we had a hurricane. Why, you would see seaweed, and creatures, and shells, and parts of wrecks of boats—and it's just an interesting thing. And there would be scum, and foam, and rotting fish. All of these things lined the shore after a storm. All of these things that had been in the deep recesses of the ocean now are belched up. They are vomited up, and they are left upon the shore.

Why did Jude use a picture like that? Raging waves of the sea, spewing out the foam of their shame. He is saying the same thing that Isaiah said, in the Book of Isaiah, when Isaiah said that, *"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt"* (Isaiah 57:20). That's Isaiah 57 and verse 20—put it in the margin.

You see, in the heart of an apostate there is great turmoil. Why does he have this turmoil? Because of the mire and the filth that is in his heart and in his life. There is something about apostasy, Brother Dan, that's different from other sins. A man may be in a false cult and still live an outwardly moral life. Some of them live very good lives. A man may be an unbeliever, and be a good neighbor, and live a very good moral life. But from my study of apostasy, I've found out there is something true about an apostate. When an apostate who has known the truth turns from the truth, he begins to ridicule the truth; and, he opens his heart and his life to deep gross moral sin.

As a matter of fact, if you will read this Book of Jude through, you will find out that Jude links apostasy with Sodom. And he speaks of those who turn the grace of God into

lasciviousness. An apostate knows no moral restraint. Why doesn't he know any moral restraint? Because, when he sees the truth, and knows the truth, and rejects the truth, he commits soul suicide. He kicks his soul to death. He stultifies his conscience. And when you find an apostate, sooner or later, he is going to show you the vile, wicked sin on the ocean floor of his moral character. And he is like a raging wave of the sea.

An apostate is not at rest with himself, and he doesn't want you to be at rest. And he may be a minister, or he may be a Bible teacher, but sooner or later, you'll find him in deep, moral sin. I have gone to school with boys who became apostates. I have studied the Bible with men who became apostates. I've studied seminary classes and college classes with these men. They seemed to believe the Bible just as well as anybody else; but after a while, through liberalism and hearing these other things, they came to where they began to question the Bible. Then, they rejected the Bible. And then, they began to ridicule the Bible. And then, they tried to replace the Bible with their own philosophies and these things. Some of them pastor churches. They don't want to get out of religion. The devil wants to stay in religion.

But then, you follow them along—before long, you find out this one went down in divorce; this one went down in immorality; this one went down into sodomy; this one went down into stealing, or greed, or one other thing. One after another, you find them as they apostatize. Then, after a while, they go down into deep immorality. That's what Jude is talking about. They are like raging waves of the sea—they are disturbed. An apostate is disturbed; he is disturbed.

E. He is Doomed, like a Wandering Star

But now, finally, Jude gives us one other thing about an apostate. He is also—not only disturbed, like wild waves of the sea—but he is doomed, like a wandering star. Look again in verse 13. It says also that they are “*wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever*” (Jude 1:13).

What does he mean by *wandering star*? You see, the Bible speaks, in Judges 5, verse 20, of the stars in their courses (Judges 5:20). God has orbits for the stars. The stars follow through the trackless sky, according to God's plan; they don't wander. And in our solar system, our planets—of which the Earth is one—revolve around the sun. And the sun holds everything in its orbit.

But have you ever seen what we call a shooting star, or, a meteor? One night, when I was about 13 years of age, in West Palm Beach, Florida, I was walking home at night, and, in the north, I saw the most brilliant thing. It started, and it went shhhoosss—just like that, through the sky. In just a moment, it went bright, brilliant, and it was gone. I've never seen anything like it before or since. Boy, I wish my brother could have seen that. I wish my mom and dad could have seen what I saw. I didn't know what it was, for a

moment—just a meteor. Whether it came into the Earth’s atmosphere and burned up, I don’t know—or, whether it did, like so many others, hit the Earth’s atmosphere and then burst out and away from the pull of the sun. Out on a burned-out chunk of rock, a cinder—on out, out, out, out, out—continuing at great velocity, right on through black space, into some dark deep hole, into some bottomless pit in the sky—it goes on, and on, and on. Now God is saying that is what an apostate is like. An apostate is like a wandering star—like a star out of orbit.

Did you know that Malachi says that Jesus Christ is the sun of righteousness? Not s-o-n—s-u-n. He is the center of our universe. He is the One in whom “*we live, and move, and have our being*” (Acts 17:28). We are to gravitate around the Lord Jesus. But I want to tell you that the apostate does not find his center in Jesus Christ; and, therefore, he is like a wandering star.

Jesus spoke of the same thing, in Matthew chapter 8 and verse 12: “*But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (Matthew 8:12). Jude has already spoken of the everlasting fires of Hell. Now he speaks of the outer darkness of Hell for the apostate. Our hearts ought to be broken for the apostates; and yet, we need to be warned about them. Can you imagine what it will be to be in a place of everlasting darkness? No glitter of the stars; no luster of the moon; no warmth of the sun; none of the shining glory of God—blackness of darkness forever. They are doomed, like a wandering star.

Conclusion

No wonder Jude has warned us about apostasy. Friend, this is a very relevant message.

“Pastor, how can I be sure that I’ll not be an apostate?” By giving your heart to Jesus Christ. An apostate is not somebody who has been saved and lost their salvation. An apostate is somebody who was religious but lost. Are you saved? I didn’t ask, “Are you a Baptist?” I am asking, “Are you saved?” I’m not asking if you are a member of Bellevue Baptist Church; I’m asking, “Are you saved? Do you know Jesus Christ?”

One day, you might find yourself dangerous, like a sunken rock. One of these days, you may find yourself deceptive, like a waterless cloud. One of these days, you may find yourself twice dead, like a fruitless tree. One of these days, dear friend, you may find yourself disturbed, like raging waves—and doomed, like a wandering star—because you don’t know Jesus, the bright and morning star. I want you to be saved. Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed.

Rescue the Perishing

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: April 14, 1985

Main Scripture Text: Jude 1:22–23

“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

JUDE 1:22–23

Outline

Introduction

I. The Soul Winner’s Compassion

A. The Motive for Compassion

B. The Method of Compassion

II. The Soul Winner’s Compulsion

III. The Soul Winner’s Caution

Conclusion

Introduction

Jude verses 22 and 23: *“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”* (Jude 1:22–23). The modern Church has many sins; one of the sins of the modern Church is the sin of worldliness. We’re so much like this world, when our God has called us to be different, to be separate. We hear much about the separation of Church and State; I believe it’s time we heard more about the separation of Church and world. Another sin of the modern Church is the sin of faithlessness—simply failing to believe her Lord. The Bible says, *“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin”* (Romans 14:23). But, in my estimation, ranking high in the sins of the modern Church is a sin that many of us would little dream of as a sin: it’s the sin of silence—the sin of silence—failing to witness the saving grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This broken, bleeding, bound world is ours. And, may God forgive us for the sin of silence. Winning people to Jesus Christ—bringing people to Jesus Christ—is the principle duty of every Christian. I said, every Christian. The title of our message today is “Rescue the Perishing.”

*Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep [for our] erring one, lift up the fallen [one],
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.*

—FANNY CROSBY

Now, Jude is a book that tells us that we're to "*contend for the faith [that] was once [for all] delivered unto the saints*" (Jude 1:3). And, Jude is a book that tells us that we must be doctrinally orthodox, that we must believe right. But beloved, when we believe right, if we truly believe right, we will behave right. Francis Schaeffer said, "Perhaps the ugliest thing in the world is orthodoxy without compassion"—"orthodoxy without compassion," without caring for the lost.

I remember a preacher telling a story. He said that in his study, or in the study of a particular pastor, there was a painting. That painting was a painting of a ship that was sinking, and the ship had already gone down. The lifeboats were out on the water, and the people were in the water. And, this particular lifeboat that was painted had a man leaning over the railing of the lifeboat, and he's extending his hand to one of the people in the water, swimming around. And, the man in the water is lifting his hand up, and their hands are about to meet. And, the little boy who had not yet started school came in and he looked at that picture. Of course, the picture was to illustrate to rescue the perishing and care for the dying. And, the little boy studied that picture and looked at it for a while. And then, he asked his daddy this question: he said, "Daddy, is that man trying to save those people, or is he just shaking hands with them?" Every preacher just ought to ask himself that question. And, every Christian who comes to church on Sunday morning and greets those round about him who may not know the Lord Jesus ought to ask that question.

Are we really endeavoring to bring people to Jesus Christ? Hear your pastor and hear him well: witnessing—bringing men to Jesus Christ—is the principle duty of every Christian. It is the supreme duty. Why? Well, Jesus gave the supreme example. Jesus Christ did not come as the Great Teacher, nor did He come as the Great Healer. The Bible says in Luke 19, verse 10: "*the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which [is] lost*" (Luke 19:10). It was for this reason that He left the glories of Heaven, came to the agonies of a cross, died in utter midnight of despair upon that cross. He gave His all for one reason: "*the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which [is] lost*" (Luke 19:10). Jesus, who is our example, is the supreme example that our duty is to bring men and women to Jesus Christ. The great heart of God is wrapped up in this matter of soul winning.

But, not only is Jesus the supreme example, the Great Commission is the supreme command to the Church. Matthew 28, verses 19 and 20: the Lord Jesus said, "Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19). That is not a request; that is not a suggestion. It is a command. And the Church or the Christian who is not endeavoring to do what his Lord commanded is not guilty of missing a blessing; they're guilty of high treason against Heaven's King. The Commander-in-Chief of Heaven's armies has commanded us to go

and make disciples. And, I want to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, all of that is true, because a soul is of supreme worth. It was Jesus who said in Mark 9: *“what [should] it profit a man, if he...[gained] the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what [should] a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Mark 8:36–37). Your soul is worth more than all of this round world—all of the rubies, all of the diamonds, all of the emeralds, all of the silver, all of the gold, all of the stocks, all of the bonds, all of the railroads, all of the business, all of the homes, all of the boats, and all of the automobiles put together. Your one soul made in the image of God, ever living, never dying. Your soul that will be in existence when the sun, the moon, and the stars have grown cold, is worth more—one soul is worth more—than all of this wide world with its cloud of wealth. A soul is of supreme value.

If God used you just to win one soul to Jesus Christ, think that would mean—just one soul. If God used you to bring just one soul to Jesus Christ, you have brought to Christ something that is worth more than all of this wide world. And yet, as I look at our church, I’m brokenhearted because I know that most of our people are not soul winners. That breaks my heart. It perplexes me. Most of our people have never brought even one soul to Jesus Christ. Most of our people don’t even try. But, that’s not the saddest thing. The saddest thing is that most of them don’t even care—don’t even care. If they cared, they would try, and if they tried—if they went “forth with weeping, bearing precious seed,” they would, according to the scripture, “doubtless come again, bringing their sheaves with them” (Psalm 126:6).

Napoleon Bonaparte, it is said, looked at a map of China, and this is what Napoleon said: he said, “There lies a sleeping giant. Let him lie, for if he awakens, he will shake the world.” He was a prophet. But, I want to tell you that the devil surely must look at the Church and say, “There lies a sleeping giant.” Just look around you—just look around you: a sleeping giant. My heart almost jumps out of my throat as I think what could happen—what would happen—if our people were to take their Master seriously. “Well,” you say, “Brother Rogers, that’s just not my gift.” I don’t read anything in the Bible about a gift of soul winning. I read about a gift of prophecy; I read about other gifts, but soul winning is not a gift; it’s a command.

Suppose I tell you, you ought to tithe, and you say, “Well that’s just not my gift. Well,” you say, “I don’t think a person ought to do something unless he feels led, unless he has that proper feeling about it.” When I was a boy, my dad used to go off to work and say, “Son, clean up the yard. I want you to cut the grass. I want you to trim the hedge. I want you to edge the sidewalks. I want you to rake up the leaves.” Now, suppose when he came home and it wasn’t done? He said, “Son, why did you disobey me?” I say, “Well Dad, I just didn’t feel led to do it. I was waiting for a feeling.” He would have given me one right then. Now look, folks, what I’m trying to say is it’s not a matter of being

feeling led. You've already been led.

I mean, God has commanded it. It's no matter of waiting on a gift, or an emotion, or something like that. What I'm going to show you is that if you're not endeavoring to bring men to Jesus Christ, you are living in sheer disobedience to your holy call. Now, Jude mentions three characteristics of the soul winner, of those who would rescue the perishing.

I. The Soul Winner's Compassion

And, first of all, I want you to think with me on what I'm going to call "the soul winner's compassion"—"the soul winner's compassion." Look in verse 22: *"And of some have compassion, making a difference"* (Jude 1:22). Now, what does this word *compassion* mean, anyway? It's a combination of two words in the Latin—*com*, meaning "with," and *passion*, meaning "to suffer." When a person has compassion, he puts himself in the place of another. He is moved with the feeling of that person. He can feel as that person feels. He suffers with that person.

The Bible says in Matthew chapter 9 and verse 36, speaking of the Lord Jesus: *"[and] when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion [upon] them"* (Matthew 9:36). Jesus looked at the marching, milling multitudes on their way to Hell, and Jesus wept tears over them. *"He was moved with compassion"*—not just that He had compassion; *"he was moved with compassion"* (Matthew 9:36). His compassion caused Him to do something. That's what the word means. It literally means "to suffer." And, dear friend, what good is orthodoxy without compassion? What good is it to dot every "I" and to cross every "T" if we can't spell the word *compassion*? Someone has well said, "People really don't care how much we know until they know how much we care." Compassion.

A. The Motive for Compassion

What is the motive for compassion? Well, look at it there in verse 21: *"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life"* (Jude 1:21). God so loved us, He gave us mercy—and because of that mercy we have eternal life. Look, if you will, in verse 2: *"Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied"* (Jude 1:2). Folks, we are the recipients of great mercy—of great love, of great peace, of great eternal life. Now, if God so loved us, ought we not to love others? If God had that kind of compassion on me, ought I not to have compassion on other people? The meaning of compassion is that we suffer with them. The motive of compassion is that He has first loved us.

I'm going to say something, and it's going to sound mean. It's not mean, and it's not something I'm saying off the top of my head not having thought it out: if you do not care

about seeing people saved, if you're not concerned about bringing the lost to Jesus Christ, I seriously doubt that you've been born again. I seriously doubt that you know the Lord Jesus Christ. How could someone have received such mercy—how could someone have experienced such love—and not want to share it? Oh, the motive of compassion is the compassion that we've received of Him, that mercy that we have received of Him. I'm amazed that some people don't even seem to be interested in bringing people to Jesus Christ. We're not playing games. This is not a charade. We're not playing church. I wonder if people know Jesus who are not concerned about people being saved? You see, the Bible says in Romans chapter 8 and verse 9: *"if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"* (Romans 8:9). What is the Spirit of Christ? It is the spirit of compassion. It is the spirit of love. It is the spirit of evangelism. Again, I remind you *"the Son of man [has] come to seek and to save that which [is] lost"* (Luke 19:10).

B. **The Method of Compassion**

What is the method of compassion? The Bible says, *"Of some have compassion, making a difference"* (Jude 1:22). It is compassion that makes the difference between one church and another church. We can be orthodox, but if we don't have that moist spot in the corner of our eye, if we don't have that tear in our voice, if we don't have that warmth in our heart, it's not going to make the difference.

Years ago, I heard the story of a soul winner. This man was an unlettered man, an uneducated man. He had normal, not super-normal, mental abilities. But, he had a heart full of love for Jesus Christ. There was in his town a very literate, educated, somewhat cynical man, who was not a Christian. This soul winner felt a burden to go see that man and to talk to him about Jesus Christ, and he did. He called on him one evening. The man who was very brilliant, and very logical, and very argumentative made sport of the soul winner. The soul winner had some illustrations and some arguments that he thought were quite good. But, when this man, with his brilliance and his rapier-like wit, was finished with the soul winner, he had humiliated the soul winner. He had shown him the lack of logic in some of his presentation. He had shown him where he'd even contradicted himself in some of the things he presented. Finally, the soul winner realized that he was way over his head, seemingly. He had bungled it. He was the wrong man, as it were, for the job. He was humiliated. He felt that he disgraced Jesus and the cause of Christ. This man most likely would never be saved. The soul winner, with a broken heart, began to weep a little. He told this man, "I'm sorry. I should never have come here. I don't have what it takes to talk with a man like you. I'm sorry. I just loved you and wanted to see you saved, that's all. I'm sorry." The soul winner left feeling he had so failed and disgraced his Lord. He came home and told his wife. He said,

“Wife, I don’t want any supper tonight. I’m going to my bedroom to pray. I’d like to be left alone.” And, he went in humiliation, feeling that not only was the man lost but that he had failed the Lord and bungled the job, and sobbed out his confession to God and asked God to forgive him for being so ill-prepared and not knowing how to answer this brilliant man.

A knock came on the door. The man of letters, the literary man, was knocking on the door. He asked to see the soul winner. The wife said, “I don’t think John wants to see anybody.” The man said, “I believe he wants to see me.” John came out. This man said to John, “Sir, would you tell me how to be saved? Would you tell me how to be a Christian?” The soul winner said, “Have you come to make sport of me? Are you just jesting?” He said, “No, I’m serious. I need to be saved. I want to be saved.” The soul winner said, “I don’t understand it. When I was in your house, every argument I gave, you destroyed.” He said, “No, there was one argument you had that I could not answer.” He said, “What was that?” The man said, “When you laid a trembling hand on my shoulder and, with a tear in your eye, you said that you loved me and wanted to see me saved. When you left, I couldn’t answer that. What would make a man like you leave this home on a night like this, go all the way across this city and even humiliate yourself, that you might share something that was so real to you? As I thought about that, and I thought about the meaning, and the purpose, and the sincerity in your life, and I looked in my own life and saw the emptiness, and I saw that genuine love—that as an argument I could not answer. And, I need to be saved.” *“Of some have compassion, making a difference”* (Jude 1:22).

Over in England, a preacher stood up to give a testimony with his preacher brethren. He said, “Gentlemen, many years ago there came into our home a little bundle from Heaven—a little boy for whom we had prayed, a precious baby boy. He was, so far as we could tell, perfect in every way. But,” he said, “when the boy got to be about three years of age, the little fellow grew sick. We carried him to the doctors. He had a strange sickness. The doctors were not able to properly diagnose it. They did not know what was wrong. He grew increasingly sicker. We brought him home from the hospital because he might as well die at home; they were doing nothing for him. One day the doctor came into the house. The little boy grew very, very weak. Finally, the doctor reached for the vital signs, put his hands there to try to feel the pulse, and the doctors looked up and said, ‘He’s gone. He is dead.’” That preacher said, “I told my wife, ‘Bring some warm blankets.’” He said, “I ripped my coat. I ripped open my shirt, and I took the body of our three-year-old boy, and I put it in my bosom, and I wrapped him in warm blankets, and I held him next to my heart, and I prayed for him. For nine solid hours, I prayed.” He said, “Sirs, today that boy is that 23 years of age. He’s a senior in college, actively serving His Lord.” When I heard that story, I thought, “Oh, that’s what we need

to do.” We need to take this world into our heart. It’s a glowing heart. The warmth of our love, and our prayers, and bring this world to Jesus Christ. The method of compassion is the method of the Church.

“Of some have compassion, making a difference” (Jude 1:22). Do we care? Souls are dying, undone, lost without Christ. Do you really care? I say, do you care?

II. The Soul Winner’s Compulsion

Now, the second thing I want us to think about: not only is the soul winner’s compassion important, but think with me about the soul winner’s compulsion. Look in verse 23: *“And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire”* (Jude 1:23).

If, on your way home, you were to see a burning building, and in that building you were to see a child about to be engulfed by the flames, and you saw that you had an opportunity to go into that building and rescue that perishing child, wouldn’t you feel compulsion to do it? I mean, to snatch a child—or a man, or a woman, or anybody, for that matter—from the fire? Would you not do it? Would you not have a compulsion to do it rather than to see that person perish in the flames? What fire is he talking about? Look in verse 7: *“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire”—“eternal fire”* (Jude 1:7). The people in Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed with fire and brimstone from Heaven—yes. But, that wasn’t the worst fire. Now, the inhabitants of Sodom, the inhabitants of Gomorrah, are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. They’re being tormented in flames. Sometimes when a preacher preaches about the agonies of Hell, he’s accused of being a sensationalist. He’s accused of being non-loving. He is accused of being uneducated.

I’m going to quote a preacher now. I think He’s the best preacher that ever lived, and I think He’s the most loving man that ever lived and the most wise man that ever lived. His name is Jesus. I want you to hear what Jesus had to say about Hell. I’m just going to quote His words. Matthew 10 and verse 28: *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28). Matthew 13, verses 41 and 42: *“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: [and] there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”* (Matthew 13:41–42). Matthew 25, verse 41: *“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Matthew 25:41). Matthew 25, verse 46: *“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”* (Matthew 25:46).

Ladies and Gentlemen, those are the words of Jesus Christ. You say, “Well, Brother Rogers, I don’t believe it’s really fire. I believe that Jesus just chose the word *fire* to describe something else.” Well, dear friend, the figure is always weaker than reality. And, if fire is only a figure of what the reality is, then the reality is worse than fire. There’s no way you can explain it away—anything, any explanation. If the Lamb of God—the Son of God who was Truth incarnate and greatly compassionate—if He chose to use the word *fire* to describe the punishment of our brothers and sisters, fathers, mothers, and neighbors without Jesus Christ, how, dear friend, our compassion ought to be moved to compulsion! How we ought to be moved with compassion to, with fear, to snatch them—fear of their eternal doom—to bring them from the flames!

Lee Scarborough, former president of Southwestern Seminary, said this: “To refuse to witness the saving gospel to a lost world day by day is nothing short of high treason.” R. A. Torrey said this: “I would like to know what right any man has to call himself a follower of Jesus Christ if he’s not a soul winner.” Did you hear that? “I would like to know what right any man has to call himself a follower of Jesus Christ if he’s not a soul winner.” Charles Haddon Spurgeon said this—perhaps the greatest preacher of mortal men that ever lived—he said, “I had rather bring one soul to Jesus Christ than to unpick all the mysteries in the divine Word.” What a scholar he was, and what a love for the Bible he had! But, he said, “More important than that is to bring people to Jesus Christ.” There is the soul winner’s compulsion. I mean, dear friend, if you believe in Hell, if you believe what the Bible teaches, then you’re going to want to bring people to Jesus—you are.

III. The Soul Winner’s Caution

Thirdly and finally, I want you to notice the soul winner’s caution. Look again, if you will, in verse 23: “*And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh*” (Jude 1:23). Now, the word for *garment* is the Greek word for the undergarment, the lining that went under the tunic. Now, what he’s saying is this—that when you reach out to save these people, the people that you’re going to be reaching out to, these are people who are moral lepers. You see, in the Bible, sin is illustrated by leprosy. Leprosy, in the Old Testament, was a vile, horrible, contagious disease. The leper needed mercy and yet, at the same time, the leper was unclean. And, everywhere the leper went, he had to cry out, “Unclean! Unclean!” And, the leper was separated from the camp in a leper colony; and yet, God loved the leper. But, God said, “You have to be careful when you’re dealing with a leper. You can get contaminated.” And so, God gave them a warning in Leviticus chapter 13, verse 52: He said, “He shall therefore burn that garment”—talking about the garment the leper was wearing—“*[He has to] burn that garment...wherein the plague is: for it is a fretting*

leprosy”—a contagious leprosy—“*it shall be burnt with fire*” (Leviticus 13:52).

Now, He’s saying, “When you deal with a lost soul, you must have compassion. When you deal with a lost soul, there must be a compulsion. But, never let your compassion and your compulsion destroy your caution. He’s still a sinner.” And, there is a contamination of sin. Never, never compromise to win someone to Jesus Christ. You’ll never bring people to Jesus Christ by becoming like them. You may be with them, but you do not become like them. Now, every pastor feels a tension when he’s preaching, because if he’s a good pastor and a good preacher, he’s going to be telling his people they need to have unsaved friends—and you do. Do you know why they crucified Jesus? Because He was a friend of sinners. And, thank God! Amen? You better thank Him that He’s a friend of sinners. They crucified Jesus because He was a friend of sinners. He kept company with sinners.

Somebody says, “Well, I’m a separated Christian. I don’t have any unsaved friends.” What a pity. You know, you’re a little more Christian than Jesus was! You’re a little more separated than Jesus was. Jesus was a friend of sinners. You know, the devil doesn’t care which side of the road he wrecks your automobile on as long as he keeps you off the road. Every road has two ditches. Over here is the ditch of the ultra-separatist who doesn’t have any unsaved friends. We put the fish in one barrel, as it were, and the salt in another barrel, when Jesus said, “We’re to be the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). Then, over here is the other ditch. These are the people who are indeed such friends of sinners that they’re so much like the sinners they can’t even really witness to them. They’ve compromised, and they have become polluted by the garment. Jesus was a friend of sinners, but He lived a holy life. And so, dear friend, you’re to have compassion. You’re to be a friend of sinners. You’re to have compulsion—but oh, you must have caution.

I must say, “O God, don’t let me compromise. God, give me that wisdom. Give me that ability to be so Spirit-filled, to be protected by the Holy Spirit, to be so committed that the contagion of sin will not touch me while I deal with that sinner and bring him to Jesus.” Oh, that there will be the soul winner’s compassion! Oh, that there will be the soul winner’s compulsion! Oh, that there will be the soul winner’s caution! And, we would be so pure and so clean.

Conclusion

A few winters ago in Birmingham, what seemed like a tragedy happened. A father went to a hospital to pick up the little newborn baby and mother. He left the automobile running with the keys in the car—the three-year-old in the backseat. Somebody came to steal the car, not realizing a child was in the backseat. It was an unintentional kidnapping, evidently. Later they found the car abandoned, but they couldn’t find the

boy. And, the people in Birmingham, Alabama, set out to find that little boy, because it was winter and snow was on the ground. There was a Vietnam veteran—he joined in the hunt. In his mind, he thought, “Well, maybe it wasn’t a kidnapping. Maybe the little boy just got out of the car, and maybe he is somewhere in the vicinity of where the car was abandoned.” He took a flashlight—it was getting dark—and he began to shine that flashlight up and down alleys and into corners and into dark recesses. There was an old house there that was boarded up, and out on the front porch of that house was a swing. And, on the swing were some newspapers piled up. He shined the light on the newspapers and saw some movement. He cried out, “Billy? Billy?” Billy said, “Is that you, Daddy? Is that you, Daddy?” And, this vet praised the name of God; he’d found him. He said, “No, Billy—I’m not your daddy, but I’m here to take you to your daddy.”

Friend, that’s the job of the Church—to rescue the perishing, to seek them out. Our job is to find them, to bring them to Him. *“For this cause [Jesus] came...into the world”* (John 18:37). For this cause this church exists. And, what good will our buildings be if we don’t have a heart of compassion for the lost?

Blessed Assurance

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: April 21, 1985

Time: 00AM

Main Scripture Text: Jude 1:24–25

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.”

JUDE 1:24–25

Outline

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- I. The Sovereignty of the Savior
 - II. The Security of the Saint
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 - B. God’s Infinite Power
 - C. God’s Eternal Purpose
 - III. The Sufficiency of the Salvation
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Introduction

Now I want you to take your Bibles, please, and turn, please, to the Book of Jude—next to the last book in the Bible. Today is the last message in our book, in Jude; and, actually, I have enjoyed this. And this is first time I’ve ever really preached through the Book of Jude, and it has been a great strength to my own heart. Now we’re going to read together verses 24 and 25. Jude ends this book on a note of praise. Really, here is a grand doxology. He says, *“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen”* (Jude 1:24–25).

Now folks, it is so very important that, whatever endeavor that you have, that you have hope there. And I suppose that *hopelessness* is the saddest word in all of the world; and *hope*, perhaps, is the most beautiful word in all of the world.

Let me illustrate. Let me take you on a Caribbean cruise. Let’s suppose you’re down in the Caribbean on a luxurious cruise ship, and everything is beautiful. You have all of your best friends there. The music is grand; the entertainment is wonderful. The sky is a topaz blue. The food—it melts in your mouth. The sea is slick and calm, and just

everything is wonderful. You say, “This is the best time I’ve ever had on a vacation in all of my life.”

Then, the captain comes on, and he says, “I have an announcement, ladies and gentlemen. We’re going to continue the entertainment. The ship is going to do even a better job than it normally does with the cuisine. The crew is going to go all out to make you comfortable. We’re going to have fun and games, and entertainment, and music—everything to meet everything you need.” About that time, you are saying, “Oh, this is wonderful.” Then, he says, “There has been one change in the plans. We’re not going to sail to any one particular port. But we’re going to go out here in the middle of the ocean, and we’re going to sail around, and around, and around, and around in circles. And we’re going to continue to sail around in that circle, until we run out of food, and run out of fuel, and run out of water. And when we do, we’re going to scuttle the ship and sink it.”

At that moment, no matter how much you’re enjoying the cruise, it doesn’t seem to be quite as good, does it? At that moment, when you know that you’re going around in a meaningless circle, not going anywhere, it doesn’t matter how good the food is, it doesn’t matter how fun the games are, and it doesn’t matter how beautiful the weather is, when you have the idea that, as far as that particular cruise is concerned, it is a pretty hopeless matter, if indeed what the captain says is true. That takes the joy out immediately. And I’m telling you, dear friend, that the joy of the present will not diminish the fact there is no hope for the future.

But on the one hand, let’s suppose you’re in the hospital, and that, right now, you are in excruciating pain and discomfort. And the doctor comes to you, and he says, “I have good news for you. The good news is that, while the pain will continue for a while, and while the discomfort may be there, and while you cannot go home immediately, at the same time, I have good news for you. You will be cured. You will get well.” And he gives you that ray of hope and that kind of hope. And the doctor says, “You will get well.” Then, you say, “Well, I’ll be in here for a few weeks, and there may be pain, and there may be difficulty. There may be all of these things that come with being in the hospital, but that’s all right. I can look past that, as long as I know there is hope.” Isn’t that right? It’s hope, you see, that keeps us going.

Well, let me tell you something. In a greater way, dear friend, we live in a world where many people do not have much hope. And it doesn’t matter how much they enjoy it; it doesn’t matter how many of the things of this world they have, or how much of this world’s goods they have—if they have no hope, they are, of all men, most miserable (1 Corinthians 15:19). And on the other hand, if you are going through difficulties, and trials, and troubles, right now, if you can have what the Bible calls that “*blessed hope*,” then you are going to make it (Titus 2:13).

And that's what Jude gives us here, in these last two verses. You see, Jude has been painting a dark picture. I mean, folks, it is a dark picture. If you remember the Book of Jude at all, it's been a dark picture. But I thank God that, when Jude comes to end this book, he just arches the rainbow of hope over the dark storm that he's given us. And Jude tells us that, as the children of God, we can have that blessed assurance that we are going to make it. Because, as we read the Book of Jude, about all of these people who turn apostate, and turn from the faith, and so forth, we might think for a little while, "Hey, we're never going to make it." But Jude tells us that we can, we shall, we will, for three reasons. I want you to see them right here:

I. The Sovereignty of the Savior

The very first reason is what I'm going to call *the sovereignty of the Savior*. Look in verse 24: "*Now unto him that is able*"—"Now unto him that is able"—now, he's talking about our Savior. He's the One who is able. He calls Him, in verse 25—"the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 1:24–25). All of these are just ways of talking about His sovereignty. Now that word *sovereignty* is a word we don't use very much in our ordinary language. We don't talk about this person, or that person, being *sovereign*; or this king being *sovereign*—not very much. But it's a good word, and it's used frequently in biblical discussions.

What does *sovereignty* mean, when it refers to God? It means, "He is a king." The King is the *sovereign*. It means, "He is the only wise God. He is a king against whom there is no rising up. He is able to do anything he needs to do, wants to do, and ought to do—and to do it right. He is completely, totally able." And the reason that you're going to make it is not because you are able, but because He's able.

Now you see, it is not primarily your responsibility. It is your response to His ability. We've been singing a little chorus around here—Ephesians 3, verse 20: "*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*" (Ephesians 3:20). That's the one we're talking about.

I got my concordance the other day, and I looked up all of the places where it says, "He is able," speaking of the Lord Jesus. And I thought to myself, "I ought to mention them right here." And then, I thought I'd better not, because I said, "I'll never get finished, if I get into that." There are so many places where it tells us He is able to save; He is able to secure; He is able to satisfy; and He is able to take care of us. Thank God for the ability of our wonderful, wonderful Savior.

Now many of God's children are going to be in trouble. And when you get in trouble, you might say, "Well, why doesn't God take me out of this trouble? Maybe He's not able to do it." He's able, if He wanted to.

By the way, the Greek philosophers used to think about this. And they would talk this

way—they would say, “All right now, if there is a God, and there is trouble, and heartbreak, and sorrow, and suffering, why doesn’t God do something about it?” “Well,” they said, “Maybe He’s not able to do anything about it.” “Well,” they said, “if He’s a God, He ought to be able. What kind of a God is He, if He’s not able?” “Well,” they said, “maybe He’s able, but He just doesn’t care.” “Well,” they said, “what kind of a God is that? Who is a God who doesn’t even care, even though He is able? Who wants to worship a God like that?” “Well,” they said, “maybe He is not able, and doesn’t care.” To make it even worse, they said, “Well, that’s unacceptable.” “Well,” they said, “then, on the other hand, maybe He is able, and He does care. But if He is able and He does care, why all of this problem? Why all of this sickness? So He must not be.”

Someone will tell me, “Now Mr. Rogers, you ought not to tell people they are eternally secure in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Why not? It’s what the Bible teaches. Someone will say, “But wait a minute, that’s dangerous. If you tell people they are eternally secure, that would be dangerous.” Friend, *truth is never dangerous; error always is dangerous.*

Now what if a little child does not know, from one moment to the next, whether or not he was his father’s child or his mother’s child. What if he thought, every time he disobeyed mother or daddy, he’s no longer a member of the family, and, he had to somehow get back into the family? That child would be a nervous wreck, before long. I’ve met so many people along life’s highway, and they say, “Oh, I used to be saved, but I fell into sin. I don’t guess I’m saved anymore.” And they get so discouraged that they fall away altogether. What that child needs to know is, “No matter what I do, I am in the family of my parents. And if I disobey, they love me so much they are going to chastise me; but I’m still in that family.” *“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling” (Jude 1:24).*

Now Jude begins this Book of Jude, and Jude ends this Book of Jude, talking about the eternal security of the believer. Because, if he didn’t do that, when you read what’s in between, you’d get to thinking that Jude is talking about people who’ve lost their salvation. An apostate is not somebody who has lost his salvation. An apostate is someone who has received the truth, rejected the truth, and then begins to ridicule the truth, and literally tries to replace the truth, but he has never been saved.

He is like Judas, who never was born again. But a person who is truly born again, a twice-born child of God, can never, ever again be a lost soul—not because they hold on to God, but because God holds on to them.

Now I want to review with you verse 1 of this book again, and I want you to look at it, because this is how God is able to keep us from falling; this is how God holds on to us. Now look at verse 1 again: *“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God” (Jude 1:1).* Look at that word *sanctified*. It is better

translated, “loved,” or, “beloved.” It is the same word that is translated in verse 3, “*beloved*” of God (Jude 1:3). And it talks of God’s fathomless love. We are loved of God.

Now you’re secure, because you’re secure in that mighty, fathomless love. How much does God love you? In John chapter 17, Jesus Christ is praying, and He’s praying, “Father, the world needs to know that You love these Your children with the same kind of love that You have for Me.” That’s so beautiful. Here’s what He says, in John 17, verse 23, rather, “*that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them*”—that is, my saints—“*thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*” (John 17:23). How much does God love you? God loves you as much as He loves His Son, Jesus Christ, if I can understand this passage of Scripture.

Now folks, I want to tell you something: That’s hard for me to take in. When the Apostle John was speaking about this love, he said, “*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God*” (1 John 3:1).

Well, dear friend, they missed it. They failed to understand that God is able, but God does things according to His own terms, and God does things according to His own ways. He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we could ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). We might ask one thing, and we might think one thing, but God works on a different plane. God’s ways are not our ways; His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8). He is able to do above all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). And that’s what you must remember: that God, my dear friend, being God, works on a different plane.

Do you remember reading in the Bible about how the snakes came in the wilderness to bite the children of Israel as a part of the judgment of God? I’m certain many of them prayed, “Oh God, kill these snakes.” But God didn’t kill those snakes. To the contrary, God told Moses to make a serpent out of brass, and put it on a pole, and everyone that looked at it should live.

Now God did not kill the snakes, but, to the contrary, He gave a different solution—one that no one else could have thought of. And that snake on a pole pictured the Lord Jesus Christ. Somebody might say today, “If God is so powerful, why doesn’t God kill the devil?” God doesn’t kill the devil. He puts His Son, the Lord Jesus, on a cross. You see, Christianity, *my dear friend, is not the subtraction of problems from life. It is the addition of power to meet those problems.* And God has a way for you, and God will make a way for you.

Saint Augustine said, “God is an infinite circle, whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.” What did he mean by that? He meant there is never a place where God is not; and, when you’re in a problem, when you’re in a difficulty, God is right there in the midst of that problem—God is right there in the midst of that difficulty with you.

I found a good psalm that I want to share with you, and see if it is not a blessing to you. It is Psalm 147, verses 3 and 4—here's what the Bible says concerning our Lord: *"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds"*—isn't that what you want?—*"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names"* (Psalm 147:3–4).

There are more stars in our universe than there are grains of sand on all the seas of the earth; and, God has numbered them, and God has named them. But this verse says the same God that runs this mighty universe knows when you hurt. He's a God that cares about you. He is a God whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. He is the sovereign God. Hallelujah for such a God! My friend, I want to tell you that, whatever God wants to do, He is able to do it.

Now that's the very first thing I want you to see, and that's the reason we're going to make it—not because of who we are, but because of who He is and what He has promised. He is the God who is able. And so point number one is the sovereignty of the Savior. *"Now unto him who is able"* (Jude 1:24).

II. The Security of the Saint

And that point leads us right directly into the second point, which is the security of the saint. Look at it, again, in verse 24: *"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling"* (Jude 1:24).

When I talk about the eternal security of the believer, I'll always get some letters; and, doubtless, I will again today. And you know why he said, *"what manner of love"* in 1 John? Because he couldn't think of an adjective, evidently. Maybe, "what colossal love," "what stupendous love," "what..." I just can't even think of a word. *"What manner of love."* He just finally had to settle on it: *"What manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God"* (1 John 3:1). God loves you, dear friend; and, you are secure in God's sovereign love.

The Apostle Paul picked up on that. In Romans 8, verses 38 and 39, this is what Paul said: *"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38–39). He named ten strong opponents, and says, "They can't separate you from that great love."

A. God's Fathomless Love

Now listen. He is able to keep you from falling, because of His fathomless love. He loves you, as He loves His own dear Son—nothing you can do to make Him love you more; nothing you can do to make Him love you less. He loves you, because of His

grace.

B. **God's Infinite Power**

Second reason—listen—not only His fathomless love, but also His infinite power. Look again in verse 1—you are *“preserved in Jesus Christ”* (Jude 1:1). Not pickled—preserved. That means, “kept,” or, “guarded.” The word here means, “guarded”—not so much as a guard in prison guards a prison, but as a mother protects and watches over her baby with tender, loving care. He is able.

In verse 25, it speaks of His majesty, dominion, and power (Jude 1:25). Now can you think of any power strong enough to take you out of the hand of God? People think that, perhaps, the devil could take you away from God. Jesus said, in John chapter 10, verses 27 and 28: *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”* (John 10:27–28). Can you think of a power that can pry open the mighty hand of God and take out a child of God?

C. **God's Eternal Purpose**

Now my friend, let me tell you, the first reason is God's fathomless love. The second reason is God's infinite power. We are preserved by Jesus Christ. And it's not a matter of your holding onto God; it is a matter of God's holding onto you—and none is able to pluck you out of His hand (John 10:29). It just cannot be done. And the third reason, dear friend, is God's eternal purpose. Look again in verse 1—and he says, *“Preserved in Jesus Christ, and called”* (Jude 1:1). Now this word *called* doesn't mean like, “I might just *call* somebody on the phone.” It actually is a Greek word for “a summons”—that is, God summoned you; God called you.

Now you see, the reason that you are saved is you answered the call. You see, it didn't originate with you; it originated with God. And the Bible tells us, in Romans chapter 8 and verse 30: *“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified”* (Romans 8:30). Now you think about it: There is an eternal chain, a golden chain of redemption, that cannot be broken. God predestined you; and then, God called you; and then, God justified you; and then, God glorified you.

You see, folks, salvation is not your work; it is God's work. And that's the reason the Apostle Paul said, *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform...”* (Philippians 1:6). Say *amen*. Now listen. *What has been decreed by Heaven cannot be annulled by Hell. And what has been settled in eternity cannot be undone in time.* We were in the heart and mind of God before He swung this world into space. And we are the ones that He has called.

Now when you put those three things together, you're going to find that a threefold

cord is not easily broken. It is impossible to break it. And here is why we are secure, and here is why He is able to keep us: Number one, his fathomless love; number two, his infinite power; number three, his eternal purpose. Put those together, folks—you've got security. Security—that's wonderful.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling”—not because you hold onto Him, but because He holds on to you (Jude 1:24). You say, “Well, does that mean I'll never sin again or make any mistakes?” Oh, you'll make a carload of them. But not a' one of them can separate you from God's love. Old Noah may have fallen around many times in that ark, but He never fell out of it, folks—because, when God put him in there, God shut the door, and God sealed it. And the Bible says that, after we have believed, *“the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed”* (Ephesians 4:30). Hallelujah! Praise God!

III. The Sufficiency of the Salvation

Now listen, folks. The reason that your salvation will see you through; the reason, in these dark days, that we have hope; the reason that we are not like a cruise ship going in a circle—reason number one: the sovereignty of our Savior—*“Now unto him who is able”*; reason number two: the security of the saint—*“He is able to keep you from falling”*; reason number three is the sufficiency of the salvation. Now watch it—one follows right after the other. Because God is sovereign, I'm secure. And because I'm secure, the salvation is sufficient. You see, what does He present us? *“To keep [us] from falling”*—that's only one half of the coin—*“and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy”* (Jude 1:24).

Now God is up to something, folks. Do you know what God is up to? Not to make you happy, not to make you healthy, but, primarily, to make you holy. Do you know what God is really up to? God wants to make you just like Jesus Christ. You see, the Bible says, *“He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son”* (Romans 8:29). And what is God's Son like? He is faultless. And one of these days, I'm going to be faultless; and, one of these days, you're going to be faultless. We're going to be presented to Him faultless.

This word *faultless* is the word that was used of a sacrifice. Do you remember the sacrifices had to be without spot or blemish? The word that is translated over in Peter is the same word here, *faultless*—“without any blemish at all.” Can you imagine there being in you not one blemish—not anything that even has a vestige of sin? Can you imagine your being as pure as Jesus Christ is pure? One day, you will be. One day, you'll be presented to Him that way. Do you know what this refers to? It refers to the rapture of the Church. It refers to the time of the Second Coming, when we are changed.

We're not faultless now; but, one day, He's going to present us to Himself. We're going to be faultless, because we're going to be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:52). I told you before, that, when you get saved, there are three stages to your salvation. When you get saved, at that moment, you are immediately justified in the Spirit. Then, God begins to work on you, and you are progressively sanctified in the soul. But one day, after the Second Coming, we will be ultimately glorified in the body. At that moment, the last vestige of sin and failure will be purged away from us, and we will be presented to Him faultless to stand before the throne. That's going to happen, folks. Now what that refers to is when the bride is presented to the bridegroom. We are the bride; He is the bridegroom. And the bride is going to be presented to the bridegroom.

Do you remember reading over there, in Ephesians chapter 5, where the Church is spoken of as the bride of Christ? And the Bible says that, *"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle"* (Ephesians 5:25–27). A glorious Church—without spot or wrinkle. When the bride comes, she is going to be absolutely, brilliantly beautiful. And He's going to present it to Himself with exceeding joy. That's what he's talking about, right here.

Let me tell you how an old-fashioned Oriental wedding took place. First of all, there was the proposal. Now the groom would leave his father's house. And the groom would go to the house of the bride. And there he would court her, and there he would propose to her. There would be, number one, the proposal.

After the proposal, there would be a purchase. He would have to buy her. That's not a bad idea. I should have gotten back with my two sons-in-law and done things right. But back in Bible times, he would save, and he would have to literally buy his bride and would negotiate with the father of the bride for a price.

Now there would be a proposal; and then, there would be a purchase. Now after he had agreed on this, and after he had paid the price, then they would drink from a mutual cup, a communion cup, a cup over which a betrothal benediction had been prayed—and both the groom and the bride would drink from this cup. Now the marriage had not been consummated, but she then belongs to him so much that, if she were to go with any other person, she would be thought of as breaking her marriage vows and being unfaithful, though the marriage had not yet been consummated. And so they would drink of this cup of communion together. So there would be a proposal. There would be a purchase. She belonged to him now; she is his betrothed.

And then, there would be a parting. He would leave. He would go back to the father's house to prepare a place for them to live. He would go to prepare a place for her, and he would say, "I'm going to prepare a place for you, I will come again and

receive you unto myself” (John 14:3). So he would go off unto his father’s house, and there, at that vast estate, if his father were very wealthy, he would prepare a special place for them. In the meanwhile, she would begin to sew her special clothes and to gather her ornaments for the wedding, to get ready—because, in the oriental wedding, there was something very different from our wedding. The bride could not set the date of the wedding, nor did the groom set the date of the wedding. The father of the groom would set the date of the wedding, and he would prepare a great, lavish marriage supper. And when things were ready, then he would send out, and say, “All things are now ready; my son is going to be married.” At that time, the son would come with the friends of the bridegroom, over the hills and through the woods, many times, at night. The bride still doesn’t know yet that time. You see, she just has to get ready and stay ready. That’s right—she just has to get ready and stay ready.

And they come with torches, and someone runs ahead, gets up near the bride’s window—perhaps she has already gone to bed—and he gives this shout: “Behold, the bridegroom cometh!” “Oh, he’s here!” And she knew he was coming. She’d been told to expect him at any moment, and he said, “I’m coming back for you.” But he’s here. She gathers her things, and she’s swept away. And there’s a proclamation: “He’s coming!” There’s a shout. A trumpet will blast. She is carried away.

And then, back to the groom’s father’s house, and there is feasting and merriment. A marriage supper is in progress, and all of the friends are there. And the bride is presented to the groom. And oh, what joy the groom has, as he presents to himself his bride with exceeding joy! Folks, that’s what Jude is talking about here. The presentation of the bride is going to be so wonderful, so glorious.

And listen. That bride would hardly have time to get herself ready. She had to stay ready. But when Jesus comes for His own, He’s the heavenly bridegroom; the same One who calls us is the One who is going to change us. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we’re going to be made like Jesus.

The reason that I say this salvation is sufficient is because it does what it is supposed to do: make us, one day, like our Lord. Now folks, I may not look so saved this morning, but you just be patient—God’s not finished with me yet—amen? *“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 1:6). At the day of Jesus Christ, He will be finished. When Christ comes, it will be finished. We will see Him as He is, and we will be like Him—one with our Lord.

Conclusion

The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord. From Heaven He came and bought her to be His holy bride. With His own blood, He bought her; and, for her life, He died. Why are you going to make it? Why do you have this security? Why do you have

this blessed assurance? Why? Because of the sovereignty of the Savior—“He is able.” Because of the security of the saint—“He is able to keep you from falling.” Because of the sufficiency of the salvation—“And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24).

*Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.*

—JOHN NEWTON

What a salvation we have!

Let us pray. Father, thank You for the Word. Lord, thank You for the promise that You'll take care of those who commit their lives to You. And thank You for the unmistakable, unshakeable hope that we have in Christ.