

Contending For The Faith

Introduction:

As we scan the periphery of the religious world today, we see many things associated with the true religion of our Lord coming under satanic attack. We find that major doctrinal truths of the Bible are being challenged, not just by the atheist and the infidels of our society, but even by those who call themselves theologians. There are many liberal scholars today who openly question the authenticity of the Word of God and the inspiration of the scriptures. We are seeing main stream religionists today denying long standing biblical truths such as the immorality of homosexuality and other forms of fornication. And we are even hearing strange doctrines from brethren, advocating theistic evolution and denying the reality of hell, etc. What must we do in such a religious climate today? Should we passively acquiesce? That is certainly the most easy and least resistant path to trod, but is it the path that God wants His faithful children to travel? I don't believe so (**1 Tim. 3:15**). So, what must we do? Let's turn to the book of Jude and let him tell us (**Jude 3**). We must earnestly contend for the faith.

Lesson:

I. What Is the Faith?

There are two kinds of faith revealed in the New Testament—**subjective faith and objective faith**. Subjective faith is that which is within us and is produced by the word of God (**Rom. 10:17**). This faith is extremely important because without it one cannot please God (**Heb. 11:6**), and without personal faith in Christ, Jesus said that we would die in our sins (**Jn. 8:24**). So then, personal, subjective faith is crucial to the salvation of our souls. But this is not the faith of our text. Subjective faith is not the faith for which we must contend. Jude is referring to objective faith. Objective faith is God's system of faith revealed on the pages of inspiration, i.e., the gospel or the doctrine of Christ (**Rom. 10:8, 15; Gal. 1:11, 24; 2 Cor. 13:5**). Now there are a couple of fundamental points we want to make about "the faith."

A. There Is Only One Faith!

Jude did not speak of contending for one of the many faiths; he spoke of THE faith. Listen to Paul (**Eph. 4:4-6**). Now listen to me: Paul uses the word **ONE** throughout these verses. That tells me that there are just as many faiths as there are the other things mentioned in this text. If there is more than one faith, then there is more than one Lord. If not, why not? If there is more than one faith, then there is more than one Spirit. If not, why not? If there is more than one faith, then there is more than one God. If not, why not? Can you not see that all of these

ones either stand together or fall together? But now we know that there is only one Lord and one Spirit and one God, so that means that there is only one of everything else in the text. There is one body. There is one hope. There is one baptism. And yes, there is only one faith. This is the faith for which we must believe and contend. Where is it found? Written in the Bible (**2 Cor. 4:13; 1 Cor. 4:6**).

And let me tell you something about this faith. Not only is there only one faith, but it doesn't change. The faith is unalterable. The faith is unchangeable. The faith is unmovable. The faith, ladies and gentlemen, is the same today as it was when it was first introduced in the first century. It doesn't change. The faith doesn't change regardless of man's attempts.

1. The first person sprinkled for baptism was in 251 A.D., but that didn't change the faith. The faith still says baptism is a burial (**Rom. 6:4**).
2. The impossibility of apostasy doctrine (once saved always saved) was advocated in 400 A.D., but that didn't the faith. The faith still says that one can fall from grace (**Gal. 5:4**).
3. The first instrument of music to be used in worship was in 670 A.D., but that didn't change the faith. The faith still says sing (**Eph. 5:19**).
4. The first universal pope was crowned in 606 A.D., but that didn't change the faith. The faith still says that Christ is the head of the church (**Eph. 5:23**), and that the organization of the church is made up of elders, deacons and saints (**Phil. 1:1**), and that elders are to oversee the flock which is among them (**1 Pet. 5:2**).
5. Good Friday and the forbidding of eating red meat was instituted in 998 A.D., but that didn't change the faith. The faith still says that such is a doctrine of devils and that eating meat received with thanksgiving is lawful (**1 Tim. 4:1-5**).
6. Forbidding priests to marry was enforced in 1079 A.D., but that didn't change the faith. The faith still says that marriage is honorable in all (**Heb. 13:4**).
7. The doctrine of purgatory was first advanced as an official dogma in 1439 A.D., but that didn't change the faith. The faith still says we must bear our own burdens (**Gal. 6:5**).

8. Man made tradition was made equal to the Bible at the council of Trent in 1545 A.D., but that didn't change the faith. The faith still says that we must abide in the doctrine of Christ, not the traditions of men (**2 Jn. 9**).

All of these doctrines were introduced by man, none of which are a part of "the faith." The faith for which we must contend can be found only in the word of God and anything else that is preached will meet the condemnation of God along with those who advocate them (**Gal. 1:6-9**). **Hear me clearly on this: the faith does not change.** We can know that for which we must contend because it never changes. All the attempts to add to or subtract from the word of God does not change the faith. When popes issue new law that is supposed to supercede the New Testament, it doesn't change the faith. When Joe Smith came forth with his Mormon revelations in contradiction to the doctrine of Christ, it didn't change the faith. When Ellen White claimed to have visions and took a trip to heaven in which she learned that the Sabbath Day was to be observed, that didn't change the faith. Pay attention to me: you can't change the faith. I can't change the faith. No one in the world can change the faith because there is only one faith and it can't be changed.

B. The Faith Was Once Delivered!

The word once doesn't mean twice, it means once, and that is how many times "the faith" was delivered (**2 Cor. 11:25; Heb 9:27-28**). Listen to what Strong says about the Greek word (Hapax) translated once:

"One (or a single) time (numerically or conclusively)" (*New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary*).

Now let's see what W.E. Vine has to say about it:

"Once for all," of what is of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition"
(*from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*).

The bible teaches that once the N.T. was completed "the faith" was delivered and divine revelation was complete. As Foy E. Wallace once said, "Since the last apostle laid down his pen and stilled his tongue, there has not been a single line of divine revelation uttered." Listen to me: the bible is a complete book and contains everything that God wants you know (**Jn. 16:13; 2 Pet 1:3**). The bible is not a progressive book as some one suggested on the radio program a few weeks ago;

the bible is a finished book and we must contend for it and fight against any who would add to it.

II. How Should We Contend For The Faith?

Now let's talk a little about how we should contend for the faith. Jude says that we must earnestly contend for the faith. That implies an aggressive defense of God's truth as oppose to a passive approach. Let's listen to Vine again on this word contending:

Epagonizomai NT:1864

"Signifies to contend about a thing, as a combatant" (Jude 3). The word "earnestly" is added to convey the intensive force of the preposition (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words).

These words remind us that we are in a spiritual battle; a conflict between good and evil, God and Satan, right and wrong and truth and error. Paul does his best to get disciples to remember this (**2 Cor. 10:1-5; Eph. 6:11-17; 2 Tim. 2:1-4**). And one of the favorite tactics of the devil is to attempt to corrupt the word of God with man made doctrines that lead souls astray (**2 Cor. 2:17**). Thus, we must contend for the faith. We must not only know the faith, we must contend for it. We must not only study the faith, we must contend for it. We must not only love the faith, we must contend for it and we must, Jude says, earnestly contend for it.

III. Why Should We Contend For The Faith?

A. Because some pervert the grace of God (ver. 4).

The word "lasciviousness" here is sometimes translated "lewd" or "licentiousness." It carries with it the idea of lawlessness or having an absent of restraint. There were many in the first century who were using the grace of God as an excuse to sin. Listen to me: any doctrine that says that the grace of God makes sin okay or that removes the consequences of sin is a doctrine that perverts the grace of God. And I'll tell you something about this passage. Jude is describing **spiritual creeps**. I have know some creeps in my time, i.e., some very unpleasant and obnoxious people. But Jude is talking about a different kind of creep. The word **crept** is the past tense of the word creep which means, **"to enter or advance gradually so as to be almost unnoticed."** Strong says that word means, "to settle in alongside, i.e. lodge stealthily." Those who pervert the grace of God come in quietly, not making a disturbance, and go unnoticed until their false doctrine is firmly planted and in place. This is what has happened first in the denominational realm and then even in the church. This is why we

must always be on guard and keep on contending. How is the grace of God perverted today?

1. By using grace to excuse or permit a lifestyle contrary to the gospel of grace (once saved, always saved).

Sam Morris

“We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn the soul. The way a Christians lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. All the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger.”

Bill Foster

“If I killed my wife and mother and debauched a thousand women, I couldn’t go to hell—in fact, I couldn’t go to hell if I wanted to.”

2. By using grace as an excuse to disregard the commandments of God (faith only). Heb 5:8-9; Phil. 2:12; Acts 2:40

3. By using grace as a means to deny God’s ordained form of punishment (no hell doctrine). Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9

B. Because some deny proper authority (ver. 4).

Jude uses the word “Lord” twice in this verse. The first time the Greek word is “Despotes” (des-pot'-ace) and means, “an absolute ruler.” The second word is “Kurios” (koo'-ree-os) and means, “supreme in authority.” So then, there were those in the first century who were denying the proper authority of God and His Son, Jesus. Today there is still a need to contend for the faith because of the same reason, for there are still those who deny the proper authority that belongs to God. How do they do it?

1. By their lack of respect for the Bible.

The authority of God and Christ is brought down to us through the word of God. When man elevate any standard of authority equal to or above the Bible, he is disrespecting God and His authority (Jn. 12:48).

Catholic Dictionary, pp. 41-42 – “It is an article of faith from a decree of the Vatican Council that Tradition is a source of theological teaching distinct from Scripture, and that it is infallible. It is therefore to be received with the same internal assent of Scripture, for it is the Word of God.”

Catechism for Adults, pg. 11 – “Do you have to believe in Tradition? Yes, because it is the Word of God and has equal authority with the bible”).

2. By setting up synods, councils, and conventions to make laws.

To do this is to deny that Christ is the head of the church and has supreme authority (**Matt. 28:19; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18**). ***Every denomination denies proper authority because they have man-made creeds & earthy headquarters.***

C. Because the salvation of souls are at stake (ver. 3).

Salvation is what was first and foremost on the mind of this inspired apostle. He was writing this epistle diligently because of the “common salvation.” Listen to me: when the faith is added to or taken away from in any form or fashion, souls are going to be lost. Salvation is attained when one follows the faith. When one denies the faith, leaves the faith or perverts the faith, he loses his relationship with God and forfeits his salvation. The faith must be kept pure! When it comes to this, we must be a church that is intolerant. We live today in a religious world where the only thing that is intolerant is intolerance. Everything goes, as long as it seems right, accomplishes some good and doesn't hurt anyone you will find it taught and practiced in some churches. In this climate of religious tolerance, we must be intolerant. We must be unwilling to compromise with error. We must be unwilling to ignore false teachers and their doctrines. We must be unwilling negotiate with the devil and his minister. We must be unwilling to concede to those who would change the truth of God into a lie. **We must earnestly contend for the faith.** Why? Because the common salvation is at stake.

Conclusion:

As the church of Christ, we are the pillar and ground of truth. Let's not forget who and what we are. Let us be set for the defense of the gospel and earnestly contend for the faith.