

**Contend for the Faith**  
**Jude 1-4**

Well, online you can get a lot of updates real-time about things going on and articles on what might be happening, and so, just recently, I stumbled across an article entitled, "Mega-church Pastor Seeks Donations for Private Jet." Alright. And went on to read that, this was not his first private jet; his other one was getting old, so he needed a newer private jet that was estimated to be around sixty-five million dollars. It's what he needed to raise, and that's what he was asking for support for. This certain pastor has been known to have pricey cars with Rolls-Royce - pricing about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and he is unashamed about his luxurious lifestyle. It comes out in his preaching. He's unashamed to call it the prosperity gospel, and he admits to it, and he thinks it's true. He thinks this is what the Bible teaches, that God wants you rich in many ways, not just spiritually, but materially. And so as I'm reading the article, there's a little video that comes up, and there's interviews. And that's where I'm finding out that this guy is serious about it. You know, it's not just that he happens to have a wealthy congregation that gives him a lot of money, he says that's godly, that's a godly lifestyle. He's a prime example for his congregation of what it looks like to be godly and righteous because he has all the money, and he has a mansion. Well, I just had to think, as people are just filling up the stadium of a church that he has, what is going through people's heads? Are they really buying into this? Is there not anyone there that is asking the question, is this true? Is this real? Is this actually what the Bible teaches? Is there someone there that's actually contemplating the truths of God's word and whether or not this pastor is actually preaching it and living it?

And, this really isn't a problem, this idea of bad theology or luxurious living, and the lifestyle that accompanies it. This isn't a problem that's only present day. This isn't a 2015 problem. This is a problem that's been around forever. Right? It's been around all the way since ancient Israel, and it continues on all the way throughout Israel's history, and it's still even present in the New Testament. And so we get to visit and study through a small book that's often neglected, the book of Jude, and Jude is quick, and he is earnest in his appeal to stand up against this, and that is what we're going to see today; the very purpose of why he writes to contend for the faith. This is not a small matter. It is actually a very sad thing to hear of pastors that are leading congregations astray, to hear of congregations that are filled with people

who think that they're on the right path when they're not. Right? This should grip our hearts, and it should cause us to be warned lest we think that we have it all figured out; take heed lest we fall.

So with that, we get to look at the book of Jude, and today we will endeavor to cover the first four verses. So, if you would go ahead and follow along with me, I'll read them for us, and then we will begin to break them down. So, Jude, starting in verse one, says this: "Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the Saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

So today, we will see two main points that surface; one main point in verses 1 and 2 and then the next one in verses 3 and 4. So, to begin with and to understand the background of this as we would jump in to any portion of Scripture, it's necessary to do this so we understand the setting and what is taking place. We'll look at the introduction to the letter. That'll be the first thing we see in these first few verses, the introduction to this letter. We benefit in the New Testament from various letters that the apostles wrote and the men of God at that time, and so a lot of them take this form, a letter written either to a single individual or to a corporate group of people. So, what can we learn about this letter just from the introduction and the first two verses? The first thing we can find out is the author, and that's Jude, as he states pretty clearly, Jude. This is a common name at that time, so, it can be a little hard to discern exactly which Jude we're talking about. You might already be thinking of a few. You might be thinking of Judas Iscariot. I think we can rule him out; the one who betrayed Christ, probably not him. We have Judas, the son of James, who is one of the twelve, but that's all we know about him. We don't really hear about him again. And if we look at the Jude in our verses, he describes himself as the brother of James, not the son of James, so that seems to be different. There's another Jude that is mentioned in the book of Acts; he helps deliver the letter in the final decree that is made at the Jerusalem Council to the other churches. He is really only

mentioned there. And then we have Jude the half-brother of Jesus that is mentioned in the Gospels a couple times. Well, when we look at this Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, we find that he has other siblings that are also the half-brother of Jesus, and one of his siblings is James who we know as the author of the book of James.

So, to try and wrap it up and make a long story short, we see that the author of this letter is the half-brother of Jesus known as Jude who is probably one of the youngest if not the youngest of the brothers of Jesus. So we learned that he is the brother of James, and then we also see this description he uses, a bondservant of Jesus Christ. If that word bondservant ever confuses you, just replace the word “slave” in there and you got the same idea. Right? A slave, that’s how he saw himself, and it’s really interesting because this isn’t a unique identification that happens here. In fact, of all the New Testament authors, when you look through and whenever they choose to identify themselves in a certain way, this is the second most common identification they use, slave; the first most common being apostle. Paul often saying, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ or on behalf of Christ, and in the second most common being slave, slave of Jesus Christ. Interesting and cool to see the kind of the two sides of the spectrum there, an apostle of Jesus Christ, the authority sent on behalf of Christ, and then slave of Jesus Christ, the humility. I mean, some people argue that there’s no way this could be the half-brother of Jesus because he would clearly lay that out up front. He would say, Jude the half-brother of Jesus. Right? He would clearly start his letter in that regard, but perhaps Jude is being humble, and he sees his identification with Christ as, more importantly, a slave...a slave to Jesus Christ. So this is how he describes himself. This is our author; he’s a slave to Jesus Christ, the brother of James, the half-brother of Jesus.

And as we move on in verse 1, we also see the audience. The audience of this letter. Other letters, we get a specific audience. We get a city that’s mentioned sometimes, like Philippi or some of these different places, Ephesus, Colossae. Well, in a letter such as this, we don’t have that convenience. We don’t have a specific place that’s mentioned. More than likely, what we can assume, if you were to read through the book of Jude which wouldn’t take too long right now, you would see a lot of references to the Old Testament, and kind of a Jewish flavor to it. So more than likely, this is written to Jewish Christians, but that’s about as far as we can go. We can’t go a whole lot farther than that, as far as geographically, where they’re

located. It all would just be speculation.

However, kind of more importantly, and what Jude chooses to highlight is the theological significance of his audience. Right? You see him describing in three different ways, and as we continue on in verse 1, the second half of it, he says, “to those who are the called,” “the called.” The first thing he says in Scripture, this idea of being called, it can look in two different ways. There's this general call of the gospel, right? When we are calling people to come to Christ, that is a general gospel call. That's what we ought to be doing. That's what happens in the New Testament as they take the gospel. They are calling people to Christ. But then, more specifically, we find that Christians have a more specific call, and it's called an effectual call that actually is sufficient. It's efficient in bringing people to Christ, and that is what he means here, true believers, believers that have been called. God has called them. In fact, in Scripture, we learn that God called them a long time ago. He called them before their birth. He called them before the foundations of the world as Ephesians 1 would state. Or perhaps the language of Paul in 1 Corinthians 1 might help, verses 26-27; “For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.” So there's this parallel between those who're called and those who're chosen as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1, and that's what Jude has in mind here. He has in mind believers, not people that are potentially called to see who'll believe - but truly saved individuals.

And that's pretty clear just by how he goes on to describe them further in the verse. Right? So they're not just called “the called,” they're also “beloved in God the Father.” So, loved by God the Father and a very interesting description of how this happens, “beloved in God the Father,” this is the only time that we see it specifically mention this way in the New Testament; “beloved in God the Father,” rather than just by God the Father. Well, this is exactly what Jesus prayed before he went to the cross. He prayed that God, His Father, would be in His disciples and in those who would come to believe in Him. This is what John writes about in his letter, 1 John. As you read through it, you'll see this over and over and over again, one of the themes of abiding in God and God abiding in us. And we can know that God abides in us if we keep His commandments. We can know that God abides in us if we hold on to the truth. We can know that God abides in us if we

confess Christ as Lord. This is what John teaches over and over again. So these people that Jude is writing to, they had clearly represented this, those that were confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, those that were loving as God is love, those that were keeping God's commandments, thus God was in them; they're saved, saved individuals.

And then he goes on; in the final description, we see, of the three, not just "called," not just "beloved in God the Father," but also "kept for Jesus Christ." And it's interesting to look at these three terms here because really what you have is a past, present, and future dynamic that Jude's setting up. Right? You guys have been "called." His audience has been "called," really before the foundations of the earth to be saved in God. And presently, you are "in God the Father," and in the future, you are "kept for Jesus Christ" when He returns. This progression that Jude sets up that is theologically rich, and this idea of being kept, it comes up again. If you have Jude all on one page of your Bible, you can look to verse 24, and we see it mentioned again at the end with his doxology. Jude 24; "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy," "to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling" So this becomes kind of the bookends for this letter. Right? They are kept presently for Jesus Christ. And that is the future; that is the hope that they have, and this confidence is only in Christ. He is the one who keeps us. He is our keeper. We can be sure and confident of the salvation we have because Christ keeps us. We are kept for Him at His revealing. So, this is the audience that we learn about just briefly, but richly, in theological terms.

Then we go to verse 2, and we see the address, or you could say the greeting, or the salutation; how he greets them. And this is pretty common, once again. If you were to go through and study some of the other New Testament epistles or letters, you would see this often; grace and peace to you, some type of formal greeting of some sort, very common. The way Jude says it is this; in verse 2, "May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you." Once again, just pretty common with other New Testament introductions. But in this one, the inclusion of mercy in here is not as common. Many authors say grace and peace. That's the normal greeting you will come across, but to add mercy in here is different, and this could obviously be implying mercy in the past when God saved us. This could be implying mercy that we need at the future judgment when Christ comes back, and it could be implying mercy that we need on a daily basis. You might recall Lamentations 3:22, when we

learn of how God's mercies never fail, compassions never fail, new every morning, great is His faithfulness. And then peace, the result of mercy. God has mercy on us. He lavishes such grace and love upon us, and what do we have as a result? We have peace. We have reconciliation. We are no longer enemies with God. We are now at peace with Him. We are friends of God. And then, finally, love “love be multiplied to you.” The action that comes as a result of these things, as a result of God's mercy and saving us, as a result of the peace that we now have with God - we can now act upon that in love.

So Jude greets this audience and says, I pray for you in this way when I think of you. I am praying that these things would be multiplied in your life. I'm praying that these things would be characteristic of who you are. He gives us a little glimpse into how he cares for and prays for his audience that “mercy and peace and love would be multiplied” in their lives. So this concludes the introduction here of our letter. We see Jude is the author. We see the audience as those who are called beloved and kept, and then we see this prayer for “mercy, peace, and love to be multiplied” to them.

So with that, we can then transition to verses 3 and 4 in which we will find the intention...the intention of the letter. Jude is very straightforward and upfront. At the beginning, he frontloads his letter and explains why he writes, which is helpful for us as readers, as I'm sure would have been helpful for them as the immediate audience. Once again, verse 3 states, “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” So the first half of verse 3 we learn of Jude's attempt at writing the letter...Jude's attempt. Very interesting dynamic here that you'd say is unique to Jude. You don't really see this happening in other letters, and normally, this is kind of how it works today, too. You're going to write something; you just set out and you write it, right? You send the email. Right? You send the text message, whatever it might be. You write the letter. But apparently, Jude was a little torn; “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation...” That was what he was intending to do, and then we learn of the change of plans, he says, “I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith.”

So writing about “our common salvation” versus “contending earnestly for

the faith” - two different things, alright, two different intentions, two different goals. He starts off with the goal of writing about common salvation, so we don’t really know what this was like. Was he just thinking through this and planning on, yeah, I want to write a letter to these people that I love? I want to write a letter to this church. I want to encourage them, and yeah, I’ll probably write about “our common salvation,” or maybe he was actually trying to write the letter and he just couldn’t get the words right, you know. He just kind of started it and then he’d just crumple up the paper, throw it away, get another one. Okay, let me try this again. No, that’s not working. I don’t like it. Or maybe he was actually already halfway done with the letter. Maybe he finished it, and then he decided, no, this isn’t it; there’s something that’s more pressing. There’s something that’s more urgent that I need to write. Whatever it was - I don’t know which of those options it was - whatever it was, the Holy Spirit was compelling him. The Holy Spirit was heavy upon him to change and say no, there’s something more important you must write about. There is a message that is more important, that is more urgent and necessary for this moment. So, you know, you could wonder what was going through Jude’s mind? Who knows? He could have just been up in the heavenly thinking about the glories of the gospel, thinking about, you know, some of the things that we learn of what Paul writes in Romans, the process of salvation, and Jude’s thinking, oh, yeah, I just want to expand on that. I want to expand on the justification we have in Christ, and just the glories of the Holy Spirit that we are receiving and the future hope we have, or maybe the glories of just our salvation, and what Christ is done, and how God worked that out in eternity past. All these things, who knows? We don’t know. We’re not allowed to know exactly what Jude meant by “our common salvation” and to what extent he was planning on writing about that. To what extent and what details he wanted to speak on this, but that was his plan, and he felt the need to change the plan.

So, that’s what we learn next; Jude’s adjustment in writing the letter. He had to adjust the plan. So don’t take this as a whimsical adjustment. Don’t take this as Jude saying, I kind of feel like this, but I don’t know, I’m kind of more feeling this; I’ll just go for this instead. That’s not true because first of all, we know that Scripture was not written that way. The authors of Scripture were inspired. It was basically the Holy Spirit coming upon them, working through them, to write down exactly what God wanted, so that the Scripture would be God breathed. That’s how it’s described, as God breathed. So, this is not a whimsical change. This is a compulsion that

comes upon as a necessity as he says. It's distress even. It really parallels what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:16. You might remember the statement when Paul says, "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; woe is me if I do not preach the gospel." He is under compulsion, and that's the same exact word that Jude uses here. I was under compulsion, and I had to change it. I had to adjust what I was going to write to you about, and so this is what I changed it to. I've adjusted. Instead of writing about our common salvation, I've now adjusted to urging you, appealing to you, that you might "contend earnestly for the faith." That's what he says. He appeals to them that they might "contend earnestly for the faith."

There's emergency. Right? This is an emergency in the way that Jude sees this. This is so important that it's worth changing what he's going to write about. This is so important. There's an urgency in this word "appeal" that he uses. This becomes the thrust of why he writes and all that he writes. And then he says, what is he appealing for them? He's appealing the new purpose for them to contend. "Contend earnestly for the faith," as it says. The word "contend" has been used in several different formats and settings. If you look at and you were to study how the Greek word was used all throughout that time period, it was used in just a conflict between two people, maybe a contest like in sports, or some type of contest, in that matter, a debate between two people, maybe a lawsuit. It could be used in all those forms, but there is a point in standing up and contesting. Right? To contend - the Greek word is *epagonizomai*, *agonizomai*. You get the word... you can hear the word agony or agonize in there. That's kind of the idea behind it. There's this agonizing that needs to take place, this struggling, this conflict, this contending that needs to take place.

This is a serious struggle in Jude's mind. This is serious, and his audience he felt was not engaged in this struggle. Perhaps the audience wasn't even aware of it, so he needs to wake them up. This is a wake-up call to rouse his audience to get into the arena, to get into the fight, and to contend for the faith earnestly. This is the urgent appeal that Jude needs to make, and this becomes the whole purpose of his letter; exactly what he sets out to do. This is not the only place in Scripture where we see the urge and the need to contend for the faith. Colossians 2:6-8; Paul says this, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as



you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Paul warns the believers at Colossae to be careful that they are not taken captive by different beliefs. Galatians 1:9; Paul comes out and says, “As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed.” Paul reserves some of the strongest language for these moments when the gospel was being assaulted, when the word of God was being attacked. He brings out the big guns, so to speak, in how he addresses his audience and the importance of it. Even Proverbs 21:22; “A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust.” Strongholds of false deception and different philosophies are being built, and the wise men will bring them down, and that's what believers are called to do; bring down those strongholds and to battle, to “contend earnestly for the faith.”

I mean, this might kind of raise the question, well, how do we do this? How do we go about this? Do I get out physical weapons? Do I protest on the streets? Do I get very active in government? What exactly am I supposed to do? How do I contend earnestly for the faith? Well, thankfully, we have some other principles from Scripture that help guide us in this - how we can think about this - particularly in the way that Paul addresses Timothy. Listen to how he addresses Timothy at the end of his first letter to him, 1 Timothy 6:20-21; “O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’ which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.” So, firstly, use wisdom; Paul is telling Timothy, you need to use wisdom because there are people that are bringing up silly disputes and discussions. Is it worthwhile to engage in some of these? At some point, you need to realize that it's such a minute or silly discussion, or disagreement, or argument, that it's not worth the time. So he's telling Timothy, guard what I've entrusted to you, and what you have, but avoid the unnecessary chatter, avoid that which will not be profitable or beneficial for the gospel. Again though, on the flipside, use wisdom, but, also, Paul tells Timothy later on in 2 Timothy to boldly suffer. When necessary, you do need to be bold, and you need to rise up, and you need to even do so to the point of being willing to suffer. Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:8, “join with me in suffering for the gospel.” And then, further down in verses

13 and 14 of that same chapter, he says, “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.” Once again, continuing the urgency and the need to guard the gospel, guard the truth, the word of God. So, Paul says to Timothy, at times you need to use wisdom, at times you need to realize that it's not worth getting into that discussion or debate; but at other times, when the Gospel is being assaulted and attacked, you need to stand up and you need to boldly contend for the faith even if it means suffering. Because Paul's in jail - and he's saying join with me Timothy, if it's necessary; join with me in contending for the faith even if it means your own suffering.

Additionally, Peter helps us out as well - that we need to do this with gentleness and reverence. In 1 Peter 3:14-15 he states, “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. **AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED**, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” So there is a time where we just need to avoid the dispute because it's so minute and it's not worthwhile. And there is a time where we need to engage and be bold, no matter what hurt or harm might come to us, but in the midst of all of it, it needs to be done with gentleness and reverence. Right? The point is not to stand up and to contend for the faith in such a way that you're squashing people, and your yelling unnecessary things, and all of a sudden the testimony of Christ and, really, looking like him in the way that you live is completely obliterated because you have not done it with gentleness and reverence.

So these are just a few principles we can see in Scripture. It's no small matter. When the faith is being attacked, something needs to be done. We can't sit by and watch. We can't sit on the sidelines. We need to step into the arena. We need to “contend earnestly for the faith;” however, we need to be wise in how we do that. We need to be bold when necessary. We need to be gentle all throughout it. So take all that within to what Jude is saying here, “contend earnestly for the faith.” We see the object of why we are contending. And I've mentioned it already, the faith, but he tells us more about the faith. If we look back in Jude 3, the end of the verse; “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” The faith that “was once for all handed down to the saints.” This is the

object for which Jude's audience was to contend. I like the way it's described here, the kind of the literal word order in the Greek - would say this, "the once for all handed down to the saints faith." So what kind of faith? "The once for all handed down to the saints faith." That's the kind of faith; and essentially, if you were to look at the rest of the New Testament and see how this kind of fills out, you could simply limit it to, or say that it would be, the apostles teaching and what we now have as the word of God. This is what we see in Acts 2:42, the early church. What was early church devoted to? The teaching of the apostles, that's what they are devoted to. 1 Corinthians 15, when Paul passes on that which he received of utmost importance, the gospel, and he delivers it also to the Corinthians. This is what we've received and has been passed on. It is for the Saints, and it is once for all. It need not be added to. It is sufficient. What we've received from the apostles, what we now have in our laps as the Bible, is sufficient. It's enough, once for all handed down to us. 2 Thessalonians 2:15; Paul says, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us."

So, this is what we kind of see unfolding in the New Testament as the apostles spoke, as they wrote these letters. We have the teaching being passed on and has been preserved for us this day. So what are we contending for? We're contending for propositional truths. We're contending for, we're fighting for the truth that has been delivered to us. Why? Because people will come in and they will try to bring up something else, or they will twist this truth and try to convince people that they need a 65-million-dollar jet. Right? People will come in and they will twist what they have been given in order to present something new, and for that very matter, we need to contend. You know, it's a bummer because when you start to emphasize this side of things, when you start to emphasize the need to contend for the faith, one of the first accusations that gets thrown at you is you're just not being loving. Why? Why do you have to stand up and say something? Why can't you just be nice and let all this kind of happen? Why can't they have their faith and you have your faith? Why can't you just coexist? Why can't you just get along? Well, that's not an option. In fact, that would be the opposite of love because love needs truth. And so let me just look at the beginning of verse 3. Jude says beloved...beloved, that's how he starts. He is honestly, sincerely, committed to this audience. He loves them. He really does, and so within that context of making sure they understand he loves them, he tells them you need to stand up. You need to contend for the faith. This is not

right. The true doctrines...what you've been passed down, is now being twisted and perverted. It's time to stand up and do something. That is loving. That is a loving thing to do.

So, it's worth taking a step back, and even you asking yourself, why do I have faith? I mean because people can confuse the idea of "the faith." What is "the faith?" I think it's clearly spelled out for us right here, "that which is been handed down" which we have in the Scriptures. But some people aren't committed to that. Some people just aren't committed to "the faith," more specifically, the Scriptures. Maybe there's a different reason why people have faith. Maybe you can say, well, I have faith because I was born into a Christian family. I'm a man of faith. I'm a woman of faith. This is kind of how I was raised. I would tell you that's not good enough and that's not legitimate faith. You might say, well, I had a really spiritual experience. One time, I really think I felt God. I think I just had this experience that I just can't explain, but there was something happening, and so I'm a person of faith. I'd say, okay, that's your experience, but that's still not good enough. I don't think that's "the faith." Maybe you go, well, I'm a person of faith because when I come to church, I just get this emotional high, and it's so good for me. I mean, it just really helps me through the week. I'm having a tough week, and I come to church, and I get back on cloud nine, and it's great. It's what I need. It picks me up at just the right time. That's why I'm a person of faith. I tell you that misses the point, it's still not right. Maybe you think, oh, I'm a person of faith because, you know, I have a family now, and I'm raising kids, and I really want them to go down the right path, so, you know, I just want to make sure there's good morals in our family. So yeah, I'm a person of faith. I believe the faith. That's not what Jude's talking about. Or maybe you just enjoy the community. Maybe you love just coming to a place where people are nice, and they smile at you. Maybe you just like to come to a place where there's just a general atmosphere of kindness. You think, yeah, I'm a person of faith. I like this club that I'm a part of, the church. Well, all those things fall woefully short of the faith that we see here, that Jude has mentioned and really the faith that we see mentioned all throughout the New Testament.

The faith is clearly the truth, the truth that has been handed down to us, that we have full confidence in. It's not an experience. It's not how you feel. It's not built upon that. It's not what you can get out of it, and what you can kind of manipulate for your own life. It is the truth that has been handed down to

us. That is the faith we need to contend for. So if you're not committed to this, the truth that's been handed down to us, then there's no way you're going to contend for the faith. The concept of contending for the faith will be so foreign, it won't make any sense because you don't understand what you're fighting for, but if you're committed to the truth that's been passed down to us, then you understand that which we stand upon, our foundation; and if anyone tries to do anything to demolish it or destroy it, you will rise up because you know the propositional truth that's been given to us from the apostles, that we now have. That's "the faith." Kind of is interesting because, when you think about it, it's almost like it fits with Jude's purpose here, when he's talking about this and why he's writing, and how he initially set out to write about our common salvation. And now, he's saying to contend for the faith. Well, if we don't contend for the faith, we won't have a common salvation. It almost kind of fits and makes sense how this works. So that's what we see in verse 3.

Then in verse 4, we get the why. We see why; Jude's account for adjusting the letter, and in this, we get kind of a preview of what's to come. That's what I would say, it's a good preview of what's to come. Why is it necessary to contend for the faith? "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who are long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." This is the issue. People have come in unnoticed in a stealth like, secretive way, subtly, and the people were not aware of it, and so Jude feels the need to address these people that are influencing the congregation, and that's who he's going to go on to describe the rest of this letter. We're going to see in detail the danger of such people, their condemnation as well he says, "those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation." 2 Peter mentions this. He says, false prophets will also arise among you and they will come and seek to deceive you and lead you astray. Jude is saying, they're here. Jesus warns. Paul warns. Peter warns. They all warn of this happening, and Jude writes to say, ta dah! They're here, and you need to do something about it. You need to contend for the faith. He describes them as ungodly persons. They're irreverent. It's not that they simply don't believe, it's, more specifically, that they're in moral rebellion against God. It's not just that they don't believe, it's moral rebellion as Psalm 36:1 says, "Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; There is no fear of God before his eyes." These people have snuck in. They're influencing the church, and they have "no fear of God before

[their] eyes.”

Specifically, he talks about what they've done. They “turn the grace of our God into licentiousness.” They've made the grace of God cheap grace. That's what they've done. It's a get-out-of-hell-free card. It's a fire insurance policy. And so because of that, they can live however they want. They have the grace of God. They're saved, and now they press on to do whatever their flesh desires. Well, Paul obviously demolishes this thought in Romans 6:1-2; “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” I think we know that the whole of Scripture teaches that this is absolutely heretical. Cheap grace is a preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, but costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus. It is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ, and follow Him as Dietrich Bonhoeffer said; theologian talking about cheap grace versus costly grace. And then, finally, he says in describing these people, they “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” It makes sense. I mean, if you talk to these people, they wouldn't say, oh, I deny Jesus. They would not say that. Jude is warning and saying that's not how these people operate. They're not claiming up front, I deny Jesus, but if you look at their lives, it's so evident. And it's so clear because they view God's grace as a license for them to sin, and they pervert it so they can do whatever they want. Titus 1:16 says it well; “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him.”

This is the introduction to Jude. This is the whole point of why he's writing, to “contend earnestly for the faith.” There comes a time when we must stand up, and we must rise up when the truth, what has been handed down to us, is being attacked. And we need to rise up. We need to “contend earnestly for the faith.” So Jude will warn us and tell us more about these apostates, these people, that come in and try and deceive the congregation by their living and their morality. So, with that, may we consider how we ought to contend for the faith in our own lives. How we need to stand up and rise up with gentleness, but bold at the same time and using wisdom at all places.