

Jude - verses 3-4 a study for Gulf Coast Baptist Church
Sunday Evening Breakouts by Steve Thomas 6-16-24

Introduction

Jude tells the believers that it was needful for him to write to them. This letter includes an exhortation that they “earnestly contend for the faith”. The need for this exhortation comes from the secret creeping in of men who had turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, thus denying Christ. He was preparing to write a letter to them about the “common salvation” but the urgency of this attack in the church compelled him to write this short letter instead.

The Need for the Letter

Jude said that he gave “all diligence” in writing this letter. This is earnestness that becomes haste. He had to act quickly because of the seriousness of the matter. He calls them “Beloved”, because he loves them and as saints they are loved of God. But something was so urgent that he needed to change plans to write another letter and write this one instead. The topic then becomes of great interest to the believer today. There was a need to contend against false teaching that had come into the church. God has established doctrine for believers, but unless the believer acts to keep it, there is a chance that false teaching will replace sound doctrine. This sense of urgency should be felt by believers when the same thing occurs. Using scripture to measure progress and expose dangers should be a frequent activity for believers.

The Faith that Was Being Threatened

The threat was against the faith that was “once delivered” to the saints. The faith is the body of doctrine, made up of promises to the Body of Christ, so that they can live the life that God intended them to live. In order for there to be faith expressed, a promise must be given. The provisions of grace delivered to the saints, is the rule of life for the believer, so that he can live victoriously In Christ. The parsing of the verb delivered tells us that the delivery was at a particular point in time, and that someone else did the delivery. The case of the verb connects it with the indirect object, or rather what is being delivered - the faith. The Faith is also what is being contended on behalf of. The present tense indicates a continuing action, something that happens repeatedly, or that is in the process of happening. For Jude to admonish the believer to contend, it to tell him that he should keep contending.

Certain Men Have Crept in Unawares

As Christ predicted in the Mystery Parables in Matthew 13, tares have been sown into the church. Sometimes it is difficult to tell the difference between the unbeliever and the believer in the church. However, when false doctrine begins emanating from the false teacher, the tare can be exposed. Jude is about to expose the tare/false teacher in this letter. He claims that the men have crept in unawares (settled in alongside, stealthily) and exchanging the grace of God for lasciviousness. Jude states that these men were forewritten to a condemnation that he is about to describe. The same term “forewritten” is used to describe scripture in Romans 15:4. God has already determined how to handle these false teachers.

Denying the Master

The actions that these men have taken in the assembly are serious. They have perverted/exchanged the grace of God for lasciviousness. The grace of God is not a license to sin. This topic is dealt with in other passages (Rom_6:1-2; Gal_5:13; Tit_2:11-12; Heb_12:15-16; 1Pe_2:16; 2Pe_2:10, 2Pe_2:18-22). Lasciviousness can be described as allowing the sin nature to explore its full boundaries - giving the flesh whatever it wants. The Master has set boundaries for the believer. The flesh will seek to cross these boundaries and live how it wants to. A spiritual believer will be led by the Spirit and will seek to do the Master's will. These men were teaching that grace was something that gave them permission to explore the depths of their desires. As scripture has shown, this is not accurate. Jude will also show several situations in history that God displayed that He will not tolerate this. These accounts will be found in the next section of the letter.

One of the significant things to note here, is that a believer cannot call Jesus Master, and then live however he chooses. If a believer chooses to live this way, chastening will result, possibly even what John calls a sin unto death.

Conclusion

Jude is setting the stage for some intense case-studies of when individuals crossed lines they should not have. He tells believers that this is serious business, and should be addressed. The accounts that follow in the next section will show just how serious God is about protecting the faith delivered and the grace that is the believer's rule of life.