Almont Vineyard Church

Week 2 Faith Under Fire

October 31, 2026

Opening Monologue

Opening Monologue
(Faith Under Fire Series – Week 2)
Welcome to the AVC App. This is the sermon portion of the application—where you'll find spiritual applications, commentary, and deeper insights connected to this week's message. If you want to go further into God's Word, this is the place to be. Dive in and enjoy as you get into Scripture.

Last week we began a new sermon series titled **Faith Under Fire**. We talked about the call that is on every Christian's life: to rise up and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Word. If you missed that sermon, you can watch it here:
👉 https://youtu.be/AUgpHpki3wk?si=OVUjYCwoXoXUN9IB

The **Chi Rho** symbol is a fitting representation for the epistle of Jude. (This week I'll share a brief history of the symbol and why it connects so well to the message.)

Our launching pad for this week is **Jude 4**:

"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." (1984 NIV)

On the surface it can be easy to breeze past a verse like this. But make no mistake—Jude is speaking directly to the church then and to the church today. Satan is still actively trying to use a license for immorality to reshape our society, our churches, and our families—seeking to brainwash anyone who will take the bait.

Christians, may we stand up, stand for, and stand firmly on God's Word and on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Come be both challenged and encouraged by God's holy Word.

In Christ,

Rev. Brad Standfest

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Week 2 Series: Faith Under Fire" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons: **
****Web:** https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media
You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch

Key Sermon Text

Jude 20: “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.” https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=jude%2020&version=NIV

Jude 4: “For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.” https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=jude%204&version=NIV

2 Corinthians 11: 13-15 “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15 It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.” https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20corinthians%2011%3A%2013-15&version=NIV

Ephesians 6:12 Says: (We are) fighting “against Spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206%3A12%20&version=NIV

Spiritual Reflection

The Chi Rho and the Book of Jude: Standing Firm Under the Banner of Christ

The Chi Rho is one of the earliest and most enduring Christian symbols. It combines the Greek letters chi (X) and rho (P)—the first two letters of Christos(ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ)—into a single monogram that functions as an abbreviation for the name of Christ. The letters are superimposed in a cross-like form, creating a visually distinctive sign that points both to the person of Jesus and to the cross on which He secured victory.

Historically, the symbol rose to prominence through the experience of Constantine the Great. In 312, on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, Constantine is reported to have received a vision in which the Chi Rho appeared with the words “By this sign you will conquer.” He ordered the symbol placed on his soldiers’ shields. The subsequent victory convinced him that the Christian God had granted him triumph. The Chi Rho thereafter became widely recognized as a representation of Christ, and Constantine later commissioned the labarum—a military standard bearing the Chi Rho mounted atop a cross-shaped pole within a golden wreath. Coins of the period depicted the emperor holding this standard, with the figure of Victory at the helm, conveying the conviction that an empire ruled under Christ’s banner would be guided toward triumph.

The book of Jude reflects this same reality: the call to contend for the faith under the banner of Christ, and the assurance of victory in Him. Jude writes with urgency to believers who are facing infiltration by false teachers. These men, he says, “have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord” (Jude 4, 1984 NIV). Just as Constantine’s soldiers were called to march under a clear, public sign of Christ, Jude summons the church to make a clear, public stand. The faith “once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3) is not to be quietly compromised; it is to be contended for.

Jude’s letter also mirrors the protective and victorious nature of the Chi Rho. The false teachers deny the very Lord whose name the symbol proclaims. They turn grace into a license for immorality and reject the sovereign authority of Jesus. Jude’s response is not retreat but resistance rooted in the character and power of God. He

reminds believers of past judgments (unbelieving Israelites, fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah) so that they will not be deceived, then he turns their attention to the One who is able to keep them. The letter closes with a doxology that sounds like a victory proclamation: “To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen” (Jude 24–25, 1984 NIV).

In Christ we have victory. The Chi Rho was never meant to function as a mere talisman or superstitious charm; its power lay in what—and Whom—it represented. Likewise, the church’s strength does not rest in programs, personalities, or cultural influence, but in the Lord whose name we bear. Jude calls us to build ourselves up in our most holy faith, to pray in the Holy Spirit, and to keep ourselves in God’s love (Jude 20–21). We stand up for the faith because Jesus Christ is our only Sovereign and Lord. We stand firm because the One who appeared to Constantine with the promise of conquest is the same One who keeps His people from falling and who will present us faultless before His glory with great joy.

The Chi Rho points to Christ. The book of Jude contends for Christ. Both declare the same truth: under His banner we are called to stand, and in Him we have the victory.

Defending the Faith

The call that comes to every believer is clear: rise up and defend the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. This is not a task reserved for pastors, elders, or professional theologians. Jude writes to ordinary Christians and tells them to contend for the faith (Jude 3). All believers—not merely church leaders—bear responsibility for defending Christ’s truth.

The word “contend” carries the intensity of a wrestling match. It is not a casual disagreement. It is a strenuous struggle that requires the full engagement of the believer’s life. We contend because the faith is under pressure. False teaching and moral compromise do not always arrive with open hostility. Often they slip in quietly, the way Jude describes in chapter 4. The danger is real, and the response must be equally real.

The Word of God Is Our Weapon

We do not defend the faith with human cleverness or cultural influence. We defend it with the living Word of God. “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12, 1984 NIV). Scripture is not a static textbook. It is alive. It cuts. It exposes. It equips.

Jesus Himself treated the Word of God as authoritative, enduring, and life-giving. When tempted in the wilderness, He answered the devil by quoting Scripture: “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4, 1984 NIV). He declared that not the smallest letter of the Law would disappear until everything is accomplished (Matthew 5:18). Near the end of His earthly ministry He said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33, 1984 NIV).

He told those who believed in Him, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31–32, 1984 NIV). In His high-priestly prayer He asked the Father, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17, 1984 NIV). He pronounced a blessing on

those who hear the Word of God and obey it (Luke 11:28). And He warned that the difference between a wise and a foolish builder is whether a person hears His words and puts them into practice (Matthew 7:24–27).

Jesus also made clear that the Scriptures point to Him. He told the religious leaders, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me” (John 5:39, 1984 NIV). To reject or distort the Word is ultimately to reject or distort the One the Word reveals. When the Sadducees tried to trap Him, He answered, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Matthew 22:29, 1984 NIV). Ignorance of the Word leaves people vulnerable. Knowledge of the Word, joined with obedience, anchors the soul.

The same seriousness about the integrity of God’s Word appears at the close of Scripture. Revelation 22:18–19 issues a solemn warning: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book” (1984 NIV). The principle reaches beyond the book of Revelation alone. God’s Word is not to be altered—neither by addition nor by subtraction. We are stewards of what has been given, not editors of what we prefer. To defend the faith is to refuse to shrink the Word, expand it with human ideas, or treat any part of it as optional.

Spiritual growth requires that we press ourselves forward in the Word so that we understand it. Scripture itself trains us to handle truth accurately. It gives us the capacity to teach, rebuke, and correct in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16–17). This is not passive knowledge. It is becoming so familiar with biblical doctrine that deception becomes obvious. Today’s Christian must be vigilant. False doctrines still deceive those who are unfamiliar with Scripture. The more we know the Word, the less room there is for subtle error to take root.

Prayer Under the Spirit’s Direction

Knowledge alone is not enough. Jude also calls believers to pray in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20). Praying under the Spirit’s direction provides supernatural help in our weakness. It enables us to grasp God’s truth and to resist the deception of false teachers. This is not merely an intellectual defense. It is an invitation for the Spirit of God to guard our understanding and sharpen our discernment. When we pray in dependence on the Spirit, we are not fighting in our own strength. We are standing in the strength the Lord supplies.

Obedience and Love

Remaining in God’s love means living through faith and obedience. Jesus said that those who keep His commands remain in His love (John 15:10). Obedience is not legalism; it is the natural fruit of a heart that trusts the Lord. That obedience ultimately expresses itself in love for others. Defending the faith does not require anger or contentiousness. It does require that we stand firmly. Moral integrity and intellectual clarity belong together. Right doctrine and right living protect one another.

We Cannot Shrink Back

The pressure to shrink back is constant. The world system, energized by the enemy, works to lead people astray. Revelation describes Satan as the one who deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9; 20:3, 8, 10). The great city of Babylon—the symbol of the world’s rebellious system—will one day fall (Revelation 18). Until that

day, the conflict continues. Christians are not called to retreat. We are called to stand. We cannot be pushed back by the world's powers or by the subtle voices that redefine grace as permission to sin.

Guard the Gates of Your Life

Jude's warning about people who "secretly slipped in" is not only a warning for the church as an institution. It is a warning for every believer's personal life. Not every relationship is safe. Some friendships, if left unexamined, will slowly pull us away from the truth. Wisdom sometimes requires that we adjust the closeness of certain relationships or even step away from them so that we ourselves are not led astray. This is not harshness. It is stewardship of the faith that has been entrusted to us. We protect what is holy by being careful about who has influence in our lives.

The Threefold Strategy

Jude's counsel gives every believer a practical path:

- Build your foundation in Scripture so that you know the truth and can recognize error.
- Pray under the Spirit's direction so that your defense is empowered by God rather than by human effort.
- Live in obedience and love so that your life matches the doctrine you defend.

These three work together. Intellectual rigor, spiritual dependence, and moral integrity form a unified defense against both cultural pressure and theological erosion. When grace is severed from moral formation, behavior becomes untethered from accountability. That is the danger Jude confronted, and it remains the danger we face.

The same Lord who called us to contend for the faith is the One who is able to keep us from falling and to present us before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy (Jude 24–25). We do not stand in our own strength. We stand in His. Therefore we rise up. We take the living Word in hand. We refuse to shrink back. And we guard both the doctrine and the relationships that shape our souls, so that we may finish the race still holding fast to the faith once for all entrusted to the saints.

Faith Under Fire: Jude 4 Reflection

Jude 4 stands as the backbone and heartbeat of the entire epistle. It is the launching point from which the rest of the letter unfolds. Jude writes:

"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." (Jude 4, 1984 NIV)

These "certain men" had infiltrated the church, yet they also represent the culture that surrounds the people of God in every generation. When Scripture speaks of "certain men," it is easy to assume women are somehow exempt from responsibility. That is not the case. Scripture must be taken at face value. There were clear ringleaders in this assault on the truth—and it is likely many of them were men—yet there are always accomplices. Women were highly involved in the life of the early church and even in the ministry of Jesus Himself. The point is not to assign blame exclusively to one gender, but to recognize that false teaching and moral compromise find willing participants wherever they are allowed to take root.

Jude states that these individuals were “written about long ago.” He is not quoting a specific prophecy from Isaiah or Jeremiah. Rather, he is pointing to a broader biblical pattern: God’s judgment of the ungodly was established in His eternal counsel long before their appearance in history. Proverbs declares that “the LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble” (Proverbs 16:4). Paul speaks of “vessels of wrath prepared for destruction” (Romans 9:22–23). Second Peter uses nearly identical language, noting that “their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep” (2 Peter 2:3). Jude is asserting that the condemnation of these false teachers belongs to God’s sovereign plan. Their judgment was settled in His foreknowledge long ago. What appeared sudden to the community was never a surprise to God. Their exposure and ultimate judgment were always part of His design.

These men “secretly slipped in.” The language describes a subtle, strategic, targeted plan of attack—more like a ninja than an invading army. The most lethal damage is not merely external; it is internal. These teachers do not simply wound the body from the outside; they lead people astray from within, eroding faith, distorting truth, and producing spiritual decay.

They are called “godless men,” which already reveals their character. Jude says they “change the grace of our God into a license for immorality.” Consider the weight of that word “license.” In our culture we apply for licenses and pass tests before we are permitted to drive, practice medicine, or carry a firearm. These individuals, in their depravity, received a license from Satan himself and used it for the most degrading immorality. The Greek word aselgeia (ἀσέλγεια) refers to unbridled excess and shameless behavior—a reckless disregard for moral boundaries. While it typically involves sexual immorality, its scope can extend further, sometimes implying exploitative conduct against the vulnerable.

The depravity Jude describes is not confined to the first century. In our own day, the most vulgar expressions of human sexuality are often treated as tolerant and acceptable. People degrade and even mutilate their bodies under the banner of personal rights. Scripture does not condone such behavior or beliefs. Alternative lifestyles are nowhere celebrated in the Bible. What the Bible does say is that God created man in His own image and likeness—male and female (Genesis 1:27). That is God’s Word. That is the truth.

Jude 4 exposes a fundamental threat: deception operates through subtle infiltration, not obvious invasion. These teachers’ doctrines did not sound obviously wrong at first. Their subtlety lured believers away from truth. Their chief theological error was twisting the doctrine of grace into grounds for practicing complete freedom from moral authority. Right doctrine and right practice are interrelated; corrupted theology inevitably produces corrupted living.

This is why Jude felt compelled to urge believers “to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3). The verb “contend” denotes a strenuous struggle, the expenditure of all one’s energy to overcome an opponent. Protection requires active vigilance. Believers must test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1). False teachers come in sheep’s clothing but are recognized by their fruits (Matthew 7:15–20). Character and lifestyle reveal what doctrine conceals. Believers are to watch out for those who cause divisions contrary to the teaching they have received and to avoid them (Romans 16:17–18).

The church's protection ultimately depends on maintaining doctrinal clarity while exercising discernment. The apostolic faith has been entrusted to God's people not only to proclaim but to protect and safeguard. Without this active defense, communities face destruction from within.

In Christ we have victory. The same Lord whose name the early church boldly proclaimed is able to keep us from falling and to present us before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy (Jude 24–25). We stand up for the faith because Jesus Christ is our only Sovereign and Lord. We stand firm because the One who called us is faithful, and in Him the victory is already secured.

Commentary

Jude—Contending for the Faith

These shorter letters of the New Testament are often neglected, but the neglect of this important letter says more about us than it does about the Book of Jude. "Its neglect reflects more the superficiality of the generation that neglects it than the irrelevance of its burning message." (Guthrie)

A. The danger that prompted Jude to write this letter [1–4]

1. The author and the readers (1)

a. **Jude**: The name is literally "Judas." But to avoid connection with Judas Iscariot, the infamous man who betrayed Jesus, most English translators have used the name "**Jude**."

i. There are six people named "Judas" mentioned in the New Testament, but the best evidence identifies this as the one mentioned in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3: **Jude**, the half-brother of Jesus.

ii. **Jude**, like the other half-brothers of Jesus (including James), didn't believe in Jesus as the Messiah until after the resurrection of Jesus (John 7:5 and Acts 1:14).

b. **A bondservant of Jesus Christ**: Jude was a *blood relative* of Jesus, but he considered himself only as **a bondservant of Jesus Christ**. The fact that he wanted himself to be known this way instead of introducing himself as "Jude, the half-brother of Jesus" tells us something of the humility of Jude and the relative unimportance of being connected to Jesus by human relationships.

i. Jesus spoke of this relative unimportance in passage such as Mark 3:31–35 and Luke 11:27–28.

ii. Without a doubt, Jude valued the fact that Jesus was his half-brother and that he grew up in the same household as Jesus. But even more valuable to him was his new relationship with Jesus. To Jude, the blood of the cross that saved him was more important than the family blood in his veins that related him to Jesus. Jude could say with Paul, *"Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer"* (2 Corinthians 5:16).

c. **And brother of James**: James was an important leader of the church in Jerusalem and the author of the New Testament letter that bears his name. Both James and Jude were half-brothers of Jesus.

d. **To those who are called**: Jude wrote to Christians. This is not an evangelistic tract and it deals with things that believers need to hear, but often don't want to.

i. Jude identified his readers as Christians in three specific ways:

• They were **called**. A person is a Christian because God has called him. The important thing is to *answer* the call when it comes, just as we answer the telephone when it is ringing.

• They were **sanctified by God the Father**. This means that they were set apart—set apart from the world and set apart unto God.

• They were **preserved** in Jesus. Jesus Christ is our guardian and our protector.

2. Jude gives a warm and typical greeting (2)

a. **Mercy, peace, and love**: This is not the same greeting as found in most of Paul's letters (which usually begin with some variation of "Grace and peace unto you"). Yet it is substantially the same.

b. **Be multiplied to you**: In the mind and heart of Jude, it wasn't enough to have **mercy, peace, and love** *added* to the life of the Christian. He looked for *multiplication* instead of simple *addition*.

3. The call to defend the faith (3)

a. **I was very diligent to write to you**: Jude's initial desire was to write about our **common salvation**. But something happened—Jude **found it necessary to write** a different letter. We might say that this was the letter that didn't *want* to be written.

i. The letter of Jude is essentially a sermon. In it, Jude preached against the dangerous *practices* and *doctrines* that put the gospel of Jesus Christ in peril. These were serious issues and Jude dealt with them seriously.

ii. We should be happy that Jude was sensitive to the Holy Spirit here. What might have only been a letter from a Christian leader to a particular church instead became a precious instrument inspired by the Holy Spirit and valuable as a warning in these last days.

b. **Concerning our common salvation**: Our salvation isn't **common** in the sense that it is cheap or that everyone has it. It is **common** in the sense that we are saved in **common**, in community. God doesn't have one way for the rich and another way for the poor, or one way for the good and another way for the bad. We all come to God the same way. If it isn't a **common salvation**, it isn't *God's* salvation—and it isn't **salvation** at all.

i. An individual Christian may not know it, understand it, or benefit by it, but to be a Christian is to be a part of a community. To be a Christian means you stand shoulder to shoulder with millions of Christians who have gone before. We stand with strong Christians and weak Christians, brave Christians and cowardly Christians, old Christians and young Christians. We are part of an invisible, mighty army that spans back through the generations.

ii. "Upon other matters there are distinctions among believers, but yet there is a common salvation enjoyed by the Arminian as well as by the Calvinist, possessed by the Presbyterian as well as by the Episcopalian, prized by the Quaker as well as by the Baptist. Those who are in Christ are more near of kin than they know of, and their intense unity in deep essential truth is a greater force than most of them imagine: only give it scope and it will work wonders." (Spurgeon)

iii. In the 1980's a survey poll found that 70% of Americans who go to church say that you can be a good Christian without going to church. This doesn't match with Jude's idea of a **common salvation**.

c. **Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith**: This was the great need that Jude interrupted his intended letter to address. The ancient Greek word translated "**contend**" comes from the athletic world—from the wrestling mat. It is a *strengthened* form of the word meaning "to agonize." Therefore "**contend**" speaks of hard and diligent work.

i. The verb translated **contend earnestly** is (in the grammar of the ancient Greek) in the present infinitive, showing that the Christian struggle is continuous.

ii. We **contend earnestly for the faith** because it is valuable. If you walk into an art gallery and there are no guards or no sort of security system, you must draw one conclusion: there is nothing very valuable in that art gallery. Valuables are protected; worthless things are not.

d. **Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith**: If we emphasize the word **you**, we see that this was something that Jude wanted each individual Christian to do. There are many ways that every Christian can **contend earnestly for the faith**.

i. We contend for the faith in a *positive* sense when we give an unflinching witness, distribute tracts, make possible the training of faithful ambassadors for Jesus, or when we strengthen the hands of faithful pastors who honor the Word of God in their pulpits. These are a few among many ways that we can **contend earnestly for the faith** in a positive sense.

ii. We contend for the faith in a *negative way* when we withhold support and encouragement from false teachers.

iii. We contend for the faith in a *practical* sense when we live uncompromising Christian lives and give credit to the Lord who changed us.

iv. Obviously, faithful missionaries and evangelists **contend earnestly for the faith**. But so does the Sunday School teacher or the home group leaders, who is faithful to the Scriptures. People like this contend for the faith just as much as a front-line missionary does, and each one of us should contend for the gospel wherever God puts us.

e. **Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints**: Here, Jude tells us what we are contending for. There is a lot of earnest contention in the world but usually not for the right things. **The faith once for all delivered to the saints** is something *worth* contending for.

i. "**The faith**" doesn't mean our own personal belief, or **faith** in the sense of our trust in God. The phrase **the faith** means "The essential truths of the gospel that all true Christians hold in common." The faith is used in this sense repeatedly in the New Testament (Acts 6:7, 13:8, 14:22, 16:5, 24:24; Romans 1:5 and 16:26; Colossians 2:7, and 1 Timothy 1:2 are just some of the examples). We must **contend earnestly** for the *truth*. "*The faith* is the body of truth that very early in the church's history took on a definite form (cf. Acts 2:42; Romans 6:17; Galatians 1:23)." (Blum)

ii. **Once** means that the **faith** was **delivered** one time, and doesn't need to be **delivered** again. Of course, we *distribute* this truth again and again. But it was delivered by God to the world through the apostles and

prophets **once** (Ephesians 2:20). God may speak today, but *never* in the authoritative way that He spoke through the first apostles and prophets as recorded in the New Testament. "There is no other gospel, there will be none. Its content will be more fully understood, its implications will be developed, its predictions will be fulfilled; but it will never be supplemented or succeeded or supplanted." (Erdman)

iii. **For all** means that this **faith** is for *everybody*. We don't have the option to simply make up our own faith and still be true to God. This faith is for **all**, but today, it isn't popular to really believe in **the faith once for all delivered to the saints**. Instead, most people want to believe in **the faith** they make up as they go along and decide is right for them. More people believe in "the faith that is in my heart" than **the faith once for all delivered to the saints**.

iv. In the book *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues wrote about an interview with a young nurse named Sheila Larson, whom they described as representing many American's experience and views on religion. Speaking about her own faith and how it operated in her life, she said: "I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It is 'Sheilaism.' Just my own little voice." We might say that this highly individualistic faith is the most popular religion in the world, but the idea that we *can* or *should* put together our own faith is wrong. Christianity is based on one **faith**, which was **once for all delivered to the saints**.

4. We need to contend for the faith because there are dangerous men among Christians (4)

a. **Certain men have crept in unnoticed**: In part, this is what makes them so dangerous—they are **unnoticed**. No one noticed that they were dangerous. They didn't wear a "Danger: False Teacher" name tag. These **certain men** probably claimed to be *more* Biblical than anybody else was.

i. **Crept in** means, "To slip in secretly as if by a side door." (Robertson) "Satan knows right well that one devil in the church can do far more than a thousand devils outside her bounds." (Spurgeon)

b. **Who long ago were marked out for this condemnation**: These **certain men** have a destiny—the destiny of every false teacher and leader. They are **marked** and destined **for this condemnation**, and it is enough to say that they are **ungodly men**. They are **ungodly** simply in the sense that they are not like God and no matter the outward appearances, they disregard God.

i. They were **unnoticed** by men, but not by God. The Lord is not wringing His hands in heaven, worrying about those who deceive others through their teaching and through their lifestyles. They may be hidden to some believers but as far as God is concerned, their **condemnation** was **marked out** long ago. Their judgment is assured. The truth will win out; our responsibility is to be on the side with the truth.

c. **Who turn the grace of our God into lewdness**: These certain men had received something of the **grace of God**. But when they received it, they turned it into an excuse for their **lewdness**.

i. The idea behind the ancient word **lewdness** is sin that is practiced without shame, without any sense of conscience or decency. Usually the word is used in the sense of sensual sins, such as sexual immorality. But it can also be used in the sense of brazen anti-biblical teaching, when the truth is denied and lies are taught without shame. Jude probably had both ideas in mind here, because as the rest of the letter will develop, these **certain men** had *both* moral problems and doctrinal problems.

ii. These words of Jude show that there is a *danger* in preaching grace. There are some who may take the truth of God's grace and **turn the grace of our God into lewdness**. But this doesn't mean there is anything wrong or dangerous about the message of God's grace. It simply shows how corrupt the human heart is.

d. **And deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ**: These *certain men* **deny** the Lord Jesus Christ. They do this by refusing to recognize who Jesus said He was, and therefore they also deny who God the Father is also.

i. We are not told specifically how these men **deny the only Lord God**. It may be that they denied Him with their ungodly living or it may be that they denied Him with their heretical doctrines. Probably both were true.

The Faith That Was Once for All Entrusted (Jude 3)

Jude urges his readers to "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." The Greek word translated "faith" here is *pistei*. In many of Paul's letters *pistis* means personal trust or reliance on God. That is not the sense Jude is using. In this context "the faith" refers to the content of what has been handed down—the traditional teaching, the gospel message together with the apostolic instruction that accompanies it. Jude is speaking of an objective body of truth that the church has received and is responsible to guard.

This use of "faith" for the message itself is not unique to Jude. Paul can speak the same way. He refers to the gospel as "the faith" in Galatians 1:23 ("the faith he once tried to destroy"), in Ephesians 4:5 ("one faith"), and in Colossians 1:23 ("the faith you were taught"). The Pastoral Epistles use the term in the same objective sense (1 Tim 3:9; 4:1; 6:10, 21; 2 Tim 3:8; 4:7). Acts also speaks of people becoming "obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7) and of Elymas opposing "the faith" (Acts 13:8). So when Jude says "the faith," he means the apostolic gospel that has been delivered to the church.

He does not merely say that this faith was handed down. He uses the word *hapax*—"once for all." The NIV correctly captures the force of the adverb. The gospel is not an open-ended project that later teachers are free to revise, expand, or correct. It has received its full and definitive expression through the apostles. No supplements are needed and none will be tolerated. The author of Hebrews makes a parallel claim when he writes that God has spoken "in these last days… by his Son" (Heb 1:2). The Son's revelation is final and complete. From statements like these, early Christians rightly concluded that the canon of Scripture should be limited to those writings that faithfully explain the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Some scholars have tried to date Jude late and label it "early catholic" because they believe any emphasis on preserving doctrine belongs to a later stage of church history. The same objection is often raised against the Pastoral Epistles. Bauckham is right to reject this reading. The statement is fully consistent with Jude, the brother of Jesus, writing in the first century. The focus is on the gospel itself, not on the elaborate doctrinal formulas that developed centuries later. At the same time, the gospel necessarily includes specific doctrines that must be confessed. Jude already recognizes that the standard for Christian teaching is the message of the apostles, and that any departure from that message is unorthodox (cf. Acts 2:42; Jude 17, 20).

Near the end of the letter Jude returns to the same theme. He tells believers to "build yourselves up in your most holy faith" (v. 20). The faith remains the same body of apostolic teaching. Contending for it and building one another up in it are two sides of the same responsibility.

Why the Faith Must Be Guarded: The Intruders Have Slipped In (Jude 4)

Jude now explains why this contending is urgent. The NIV's "for" correctly reflects the Greek conjunction that links verse 4 to verse 3. Certain men have entered the church and are disturbing the congregation so seriously that Jude feels compelled to write. He calls them "certain men," a phrase many commentators regard as slightly dismissive. The verb he uses for their entry is stronger still. They "have secretly slipped in." The language is deliberately pejorative. It indicates that the intruders concealed their true character and motives. They were outsiders—possibly itinerant prophets or teachers—who presented themselves as faithful members while working against the church from within. Their approach was surreptitious and crafty.

Paul describes a similar tactic when he criticizes the Judaizers who infiltrated the Galatian churches "to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves" (Gal 2:4). Peter likewise warns of false teachers who "secretly introduce destructive heresies" (2 Pet 2:1). Jude stands in the same tradition of warning.

He then tells us four things about these people: (1) their judgment was written about long ago, (2) they are ungodly, (3) they turn the grace of God into a license for immorality, and (4) they deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. The first statement announces that they will be judged; the next three supply the reasons for that judgment. Their ungodly behavior is what brings God's condemnation.

Their Judgment Was Prescripted Long Ago

Jude begins by saying that these men "whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you." The NIV smooths the Greek. A more literal rendering is that they "were written about in advance long ago for this judgment." The perfect participle *progegrammenoi* means their judgment was already "prescripted" or recorded beforehand. God was not taken by surprise. Their appearance and their condemnation were known and announced in advance (cf. vv. 14, 17). Proverbs 16:4 captures the same truth: "The LORD works out everything for his own ends—even the wicked for a day of disaster."

The fact that judgment was already written means the intruders will not ultimately triumph. God will deal with them finally and decisively on the day of judgment. Jude's readers can therefore persevere. The threat is real, but it is not outside God's sovereign control.

What exactly was "written long ago"? Several possibilities have been proposed. Some see a reference to the judgment of false teachers predicted in 2 Peter 2:1–3:4. This view depends on Jude having used 2 Peter, which is doubtful. It is also unlikely that Jude would call 2 Peter something written "long ago" unless the letter is dated very late. Others note that *palai* ("long ago") does not always require ancient history, so a shorter interval is possible. But the combination of *palai* with *progegrammenoi* points to older prophecies now being fulfilled (cf. Isa 37:26; 48:5, 7; Matt 11:21; Heb 1:1).

Some have suggested that Jude is thinking of heavenly books in which future judgment is already recorded. Bauckham rightly observes that the evidence for this idea is weak and that most of the texts cited in support are misinterpreted. Another proposal is that Jude has in mind the prophecy of Enoch, anticipating the quotation in verses 14–15. Osburn points to 1 Enoch 67:10: "So the judgment shall come upon them, because they believe in the debauchery of their bodies and deny the spirit of the Lord." It is not clear, however, that this particular verse is in view.

The most natural reference is to the Old Testament. The judgment of the ungodly was already anticipated, at least typologically, by the examples Jude will give in verses 5–7 and verse 11. At the same time, 1 Enoch should not be excluded. Both the Old Testament and Enoch's prophecy (vv. 14–16) forecast the condemnation of the ungodly. God's consistent pattern in history is that rebellion meets judgment. If verses 5–16 form a single section, the judgments described in verses 5–7 and 14–16 create an inclusio that brackets the whole discussion and underscores the certainty of the opponents' condemnation. The middle of the letter simply unfolds the "prescripted" judgment announced in verse 4.

The phrase "this judgment" (touto to krima) is initially puzzling because nothing in the preceding verses has mentioned judgment. It cannot refer to 2 Peter 2:2 unless Jude is dependent on 2 Peter. Nor does it refer to the opponents' ungodliness, licentiousness, and denial of Christ; those are the reasons for judgment, not the judgment itself. The best solution is that "this judgment" looks forward to the judgment that will be explained in verses 5–16. Those verses draw on Old Testament examples and on 1 Enoch to show that the wicked have always been, and will be, condemned.

Three Reasons for the Judgment

The rest of verse 4 gives three reasons the intruders will be judged.

First, they are ungodly. Jude draws repeatedly on the *aseb*- word group (godless, ungodly). He uses terms from this family three times in the quotation from 1 Enoch in verse 15 and again in verse 18. The concept shapes his entire portrait of the opponents in verses 5–16. Verse 4 therefore functions as a preview of what follows. To be ungodly is to commit the fundamental sin of living without reference to God. The godless person does not honor God as Lord and Master (see Pss 1:1; 37:38; 51:13; Prov 1:32; Rom 1:18; 2 Pet 2:5–6; 3:7). They live as though God does not exist.

Second, they turn the grace of God into a license for immorality. The word *aselgeia* (translated "license" or "sensuality") frequently denotes sexual sin (Wis 14:26; Rom 13:13; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19) or gross debauchery more broadly (2 Macc 2:26; Mark 7:22; 1 Pet 4:3; 2 Pet 2:2, 7, 18). The letter as a whole indicates that sexual sin is in view. Verse 4 again serves as a foundation: sexual immorality is the reason given for the judgment of the angels and of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 6–7). The same theme reappears when Jude speaks of those who "defile the flesh" (v. 8; cf. vv. 13, 16). Grace is being twisted into permission for unrestrained behavior rather than being received as the power that leads to holiness.

Third, they deny Jesus Christ, our only Sovereign and Lord. Some interpreters have suggested that "Sovereign" (*despotēn*) refers to the Father and "Lord" (*kyrion*) to Jesus Christ. Both titles, however, stand under the same Greek article (ton), which favors a single referent. If Jude and 2 Peter are addressing the same situation, it is likely that both writers apply despotēs to Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Pet 2:1). Against this view it is sometimes argued that despotēs elsewhere refers only to the Father (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev 6:10; also 1 Clem. 59:4; 61:1–2; Did. 10:3). Certainty is difficult, but the parallel with 2 Peter 2:1 points to Jesus. Bauckham notes that the use of *despotēs* suggests a Palestinian background for Jude's Christology. The two titles do not describe two different functions. Together they emphasize the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ. As Bauckham observes, the combination even suggests the divinity of Jesus (a similar pairing appears in Josephus, *Ant*. 18.23).

How do the opponents deny Jesus as Sovereign and Lord? Earlier scholars, reading Jude as a polemic against Gnosticism, looked for explicit doctrinal errors in the intruders' Christology. We now know that the fully

developed Gnosticism of the second century was not present in the New Testament period, though some of its antecedents existed. In any case, Jude never criticizes the opponents' doctrine of Christ's person the way John does (1 John 2:22–23; 4:2–3; 5:1, 6–8; 2 John 7). The denial Jude has in mind is expressed in the way they live. Their ungodly lifestyle itself constitutes a rejection of Christ's lordship. The same connection appears elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt 7:21–23; Titus 1:16).

Verses 5–16 illustrate precisely this rejection. The angels abandoned the place assigned to them, rebelled, and sinned (v. 6). The intruders "reject authority and slander celestial beings" (v. 8). Like Korah, they are guilty of open rebellion (v. 11). In each case the root problem is the refusal to live under the authority of the Lord.

Summary of the Argument

Jude 3–4 therefore establishes both the duty and the danger. The duty is to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints—the apostolic gospel in its fullness. The danger is the presence of people who have entered the church under false pretenses, whose judgment was already announced in Scripture, and who demonstrate by their ungodliness, their sexual immorality, and their rejection of Christ's authority that they do not belong to him. The rest of the letter will expand this warning through Old Testament examples and the prophecy of Enoch, while calling the readers to remain faithful to the message they have received.

Spiritual Applications

Jude addresses people who are already "called, loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ" (v. 1). The applications that follow flow from that identity and from the warning in verses 3–4.

• The gospel we have received is complete and authoritative. Because it was "once for all entrusted," we do not treat Scripture as a starting point that culture or personal preference can revise. Contending for the faith begins with knowing the apostolic message well enough to recognize when it is being altered, whether by open denial or by subtle redefinition of grace, holiness, or the lordship of Christ.

• Grace is never permission for ungodliness. The intruders turned the grace of God into a license for immorality. True grace trains us to renounce ungodliness and to live under the authority of Jesus (cf. Titus 2:11–14). When teaching or practice severs grace from holiness, or treats sexual sin as compatible with following Christ, it has already departed from the faith once delivered.

• Denial of Christ is often lived before it is spoken. Jude does not primarily confront a formal heresy about Christ's nature. He confronts people whose conduct rejects His sovereignty. The same standard applies today. Words that call Jesus "Lord" are tested by whether His commands govern our bodies, our relationships, our money, and our ambitions (Matt 7:21–23; Titus 1:16). Submission to Christ as Sovereign and Lord is not optional for those who belong to Him.

• God is not surprised by false teachers, and their end is already written. The knowledge that judgment was "prescripted long ago" steadies the church. We do not panic when ungodly influences appear, nor do we assume the responsibility of executing final judgment. We contend, we warn, we remain faithful, and we trust the Lord who keeps His people and who will deal with those who reject His authority.

• Being kept by Jesus Christ (v. 1) and contending for the faith (v. 3) belong together. Preservation is God's work; faithfulness is our response. The same Lord who called and keeps us also calls us to build ourselves up in

the most holy faith and to refuse every distortion of the gospel. Standing firm is not self-reliance; it is active dependence on the One who is able to keep us from falling (v. 24).

Resources: (1) Rev. Brad Standfest, (2) Logos Bible Commentaries, [3] Anthony Lo Bello, "Chi-Rho," in Origins of Catholic Words: A Discursive Dictionary(Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020), 108. [4] Nick Needham, 2000 Years of Christ's Power: The Age of the Early Church Fathers (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 164. [5] Got Questions Ministries, Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2014–2021). [6] Mary Kassian and Betty Hassler, Conversation Peace: Improving Your Relationships One Word at a Time (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2004). (7)Holy Bible, New International Version (1984). Colorado Springs: International Bible Society. (8)Got Questions Ministries. Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2014–2021. (9)Hitchcock, Mark, and Jeff Kinley. The Coming Apostasy: Exposing the Sabotage of Christianity from Within. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2017. (10)Life Application Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1988–1991 (notes on Jude, the Gospels, Hebrews, and Revelation). (11)Rev. Brad Standfest, "Faith Under Fire: Jude 4 Reflection" (Almont Vineyard Church, 2026). (12)Robert Harvey and Philip H. Towner, 2 Peter & Jude, ed. Grant R. Osborne, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL; Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 18:158. (13)Brandon D. Crowe, The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015), 99. (14)Tom Constable, Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003). (15)NIV Bible Speaks Today: Notes (London: IVP, 2020), 1726–1727. (15) Guzik, David. 2013. Jude. David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible. Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik. (16)Schreiner, Thomas R. 2003. 1, 2 Peter, Jude. Vol. 37. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers. (17)Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission.

Sermon Notes:

Week 2 Faith Under Fire Sermon Series

Good Morning and Happy Sunday to Everyone…
Welcome All Who are joining us Online…
Speaking of Online… Here are the AVC Connections
YouTube
App
Facebook/Website
[Let's Pray]

We started a Sermon Series Last Week Called Faith Under Fire… PP
The Backbone to this Series is the Epistle of Jude… Written by Jesus' Brother…
Last Week I talked about How we are all Called to Rise Up and Defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ & His Word…
I Chose the Chi-Rho Symbol & Sheild for a Reason…
[Power Point of Symbol]

In Approximately 312… Two Roman Emperors were about to go to War to Rule the Roman Empire…
Roman was a Pagan Nation that Worshiped Any & Every god… (Allowed other Religions as long as they paid Taxes and Were Peaceful)
Constantine & Mad Max and their Militaries were ready to go Toe to Toe… (Max had Military Advantages)
[Story of Vision]
• Right Before Battles Constantine had a Vision of the Chi-Rho Symbol… And In The Symbol was This Phrase: In This Sign You will Conquer
- Ordered Sheilds to be made for his Military
This Chi-Rho Symbol & Sheild is a Reflection of This Book of Jude…

Jude Tells us This Message:
Jude 20 "But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit."
Jude Clearly Tells us in V.3 that he wanted to write a Letter about Salvation… But felt the Urgent Need to Write about the Immorality that was attempting to Hijack the Faith…

We Kind of Ended in Jude 4 Last week but I didn't get into it… (It's the Backbone)
Lets Read Jude 4 in Entirety and Then I'm Going to Break it down…
Jude 4 "For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."

Scholar Osbourne says this about Jude 4… I Quote:
"The godless Men, 'False Teachers' made their message sound appealing… However, they knowingly sought to destroy the church from within… A calculated maneuver to twist God's Grace saying that forgiveness from sin means people can live anyway they please, fulfilling their sinful pleasures without self control."
Christians… We Can't Hold Hands with The Devil and God and Expect the Blessings of Christ to Flow in our Lives…
It's My Opinion There are Far Too Many Liberal Christians…
Let's Get Back Into Jude 4

Jude Said: "Certain Men… Secretly Slipped in among You" (V.4)
• Literally… To Come in Unnoticed… Like a Ninja
To Act like Everyone Else…
Deer Hunting
• Important- A Calculated Attack
• ESU- "Crept in Unnoticed"
Jude Said:
"They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality…"
• Remember Getting Your Drivers License

What Jude is telling us is that Satan has Issued a License to these People to carry out their Evil Agenda…
Apostle Paul makes mention of Such Evil in **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15 It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve."

Ephesians 6:12 Says: (We are) fighting "against Spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"
Jude Says "License of Immorality"…
The Greek Word for Immorality Here is "Aselgerice" and it's the Deepest Form of Sexual Sin that can be committed…
The Immorality According to Jude that is going on is:
"Brazen and Unrestrained… uncontrolled character of the behavior and refusal to acknowledge any moral authority or consequences."

• Scholar Schnieder comments by saying:
"Its one of the vices that destroys an individual from within… like the perversity of Sodom and Gomorrah consisted of it. It is characterized by godless paganism."
Christians We need to Wake Up and Look Reality in the Face
We have a Society Made up of Hollywood, Musicians, Politicians… And so forth doing its best to Desensitize Us & Our Children…

I'm Going to Get Real and Raw with you today… I'm not going to Sugar Coat it…
Some of these Perversions May Be on Your Music Play Lists (Lyrics- You Better Listen)
Maybe your Movies Should Be Looked at?
We are Supposed to be Okay with Clowns Dancing Around Our Children- Are You Serious…
It's Okay For Children to Check Out Books in the Library on Sexuality…

Friends… I am a Christian and I am Standing on God's Word… - Period
If you can Show me in God's Word Where Alternative Lifestyles is Celebrated… I'll Preach About it Next Week…
Look A Deep Perversion Has Swept Across this World… And Its Sinful & Disgusting
In the APP is a Ton of Passages on Sexual Immorality

Ephesians 5:5 "For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God"
Christians we Have to Defend God's Word & our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ…
In Conclusion I want to Ask this Question…

How Could a Society or World be Led Astray So Bad… Jude Gives us the Answer

"Certain Men… deny Jesus Christ as Lord" V4b

[Closing Prayer]

Devotional Questions:

7 Devotional Questions
(*Faith Under Fire – Week 2: Jude 4*)- Read the following passages and answer the questions:

1. **Jude 3–4**
   Jude says he wanted to write about salvation but felt he had to urge believers to contend for the faith because certain men had secretly slipped in.
   Where in your own life or in the church today do you see subtle influences that are quietly reshaping

what people believe about grace, morality, or the Lordship of Jesus? How is the Lord calling you to "contend" rather than stay silent?

1. **Matthew 4:4; John 17:17; Hebrews 4:12**
   Jesus lived by every word that comes from the mouth of God, and He declared that God's Word is truth.
   When culture or personal desire clashes with Scripture, what does it look like for you to stand on God's Word—period? Is there a specific area where you have been tempted to soften or ignore what the Bible clearly says?

1. **Jude 4 and Ephesians 5:5**
   Jude warns of those who turn grace into a license for immorality. Paul says no immoral person has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
   How have you seen (or experienced) the idea that "God's grace means I can live however I want"? What does genuine repentance and dependence on grace look like instead?

1. **Jude 20 and Ephesians 6:10–18**
   Jude tells believers to build themselves up in their most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Paul describes the fight against spiritual forces of evil.
   What practical step will you take this week to build yourself up in the faith (Scripture, prayer, fellowship, obedience)? How are you staying alert in the spiritual battle rather than becoming desensitized?

1. **Revelation 22:18–19 and Matthew 24:35**
   Jesus said heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will never pass away. Revelation warns against adding to or taking away from God's Word.
   In what ways is our culture (or even parts of the church) tempted to add to, subtract from, or redefine Scripture? How can you guard the integrity of God's Word in your own reading, conversations, and choices?

1. **1 Corinthians 15:33; Proverbs 13:20; Jude 4**
   Bad company corrupts good character. Jude shows how people can slip in unnoticed and lead others astray.
   Are there any friendships, media habits, playlists, or influences in your life that are slowly pulling you away from holiness? What adjustment is the Lord asking you to make so you are not led astray?

1. **Jude 24–25 and Romans 8:37–39**
   God is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before His glory with great joy. In Christ we are more than conquerors.
   As you think about the pressure to compromise, where do you need to lean more fully into the keeping power of Jesus rather than your own strength? How does the promise of His victory change the way you face this week?