



1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: 2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. 3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:1-4 )

The Book of Jude is deceptively brief for its immensity of beauty and truth. It is a counsel of admonition to all churches who have abandoned their First Love as have the overwhelming numbers of American churches and denominations. The answer to rampant apostasy is for true men and women of God to stand up and contend against error; however, our modern society has blinded the eyes of faithful people to never contend for ANYTHING. Whatever mammon dictates, or the state legislates, is, to the timid and luke-warm modern Christian the immutable law that supersedes even the Commandments laid down by God Almighty. Jude, the Apostle, speaks just as certainly to us, and perhaps even more so, than to those of the first century believers following the crucifixion of our Lord. Even the theology of our day has become a soft and compromising, Irenic theology rather than the Polemic, biblical theology of the Reformers. Our ministers no longer preach expositively from the biblical text itself but, rather pick a single verse around which to build a disjointed and rambling sermon. So heed the counsel of this Epistle, and awake from the stupor of the times.

A key and salient point of the opening verse is the authority of the writer and his sanctification. 1" Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." Jude is brother of James (who was also brother to Christ), the bishop of Jerusalem, though possibly not a near brother in blood relationship. He is speaking to those who are of the Household of Faith - the sanctified. All who are of Christ's Church are sanctified by God the Father, through Jesus Christ, and called by the Holy Spirit. We are IN Christ in our sanctuary.: "Sanctified in Christ Jesus." (1 Corinthians 1:2). This comes BY God the Father: "Sanctified by God the Father." (Jude 1:1): and through the calling of the Holy Spirit: "Through sanctification of the Spirit." (1 Peter 1:2). In all, Jude claims the same benefit and authority of all who serve God. He is a SERVANT of God, not a ruthless master over His flock. In this opening line, Jude is validating his apostleship under authority of the Holy Trinity. The Trinity, being three Persons, is One in unity and purpose. Is this a contradiction? Not at all, for every believer must be One with God, and One with each other. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."

The problem of weak-kneed apostasy is not a new thing in the church even if more visible today. See what counsel is given to avoid the same by a 17th century cleric: "We can never hope to advance Christianity above its Primitive Excellency (as some would vainly pretend to do): It's enough if we can but arrive at the ancient Path, and be Continuers of the Truth, and the Honour of it, as becomes the Churches of Christ." Thomas Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*: or, the Ancient Christian Religion.

A great and wonderful salutation here: 2"Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied." As the prayers and collects of the church suggests, we have all wholesomeness and healing if we first have the mercies of God. Those last two qualities of peace and love come to those who seek and obtain the mercies of God. The effulgent rays of beauty love, peace, and mercy are multiplied fold upon fold to those who are steadfast in faith.

3 "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The modern pulpit is called upon to "water down" the Gospel. 'It is well and good,' the detractors say, "to speak of the mercies of God, but please avoid the hard preaching of sin and repentance. Modern man does not respond well to it." Too bad about that, for modern man will certainly respond to the judgments of God when the curtain of their lives has fallen. They will hear plenty about their sins before the Judgment Seat of God. One towering characteristic of the man called of God is his diligence in exhorting and contending for the faith. He will not excuse the great sins of the wealthy and condemn the smaller sins of the poor. God is no respecter of persons. His Word applies equally across all lines of class and social standing. Which faith is it that we are to diligently contend for? It is that of the Apostles as taught them by the Lord Himself! Not some soft and sterile gospel that pleases the ear and wicked spirit of man. It excuses no action by ungodly government or ungodly man.

Next comes the answer to our amazement of the gross apostasy that has overwhelmed the church in our time: 4 "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Remember the warning of Christ in Matthew 13:31-32? "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and

*becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. "*

Christ has already, in the same chapter, identified those fowl as demons who steal away the Word of God. Now He describes a Mustard plant (the Kingdom of Heaven, or Church) that grows unnaturally large - so large that those same fowl come and live in the branches of the overgrown Mustard Tree " *certain men crept in unawares*" They have usurped the Office of Minister pretending to be that which they are not. They are 'wolves in sheep's clothing./ We have experienced the same in the AOC, and will doubtless experience the same again, for such deceivers are relentless in their ambition to usurp the place of Christ. We must be ever watchful to guard against political compromisers in the Church of God. They will loudly proclaim love and cordiality over obedience to God and opposition to wickedness in high places - even government. These same men have exalted their pride above the Word of God in claiming their right to alter, amend, and corrupt the very Word Itself through so-called modern translations. They thereby deny God the Father as well as His Beloved Son.

So Jude opens with a grave warning to us and to all Christian people. A warning is not delivered out of malice, but out of a tender and fatherly love. We do not warn our children to avoid playing in the street out of malice, but out of love. This warning does not originate with Jude, but from God the Father whom He serves. Jude feels the burden to warn us. We should feel that same burden to warn those around us of the calamity of apostasy engendered by the preaching of certain wicked men who have "*crept in unawares.*"