

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 2



*Contend
for the faith
which was
once delivered
to the saints
Jude 1:3*

JUDE'S BURDEN

Scripture Text: Jude 3

This lesson reveals the burden behind Jude's letter. Jude was in the process of drafting a doctrinal treatise but set it hastily aside when necessity and inspiration prompted him, because his divinely inspired burden compelled him to write. In our day, when many make a professional vocation out of religion, the true church still looks for those who have been divinely called and have a burden prompting them in what they do.

MEMORY VERSE: *For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16)!*

Letter to the Church

Beloved. Jude addressed his readers as *Beloved*. He was speaking to those whom God loves, those who have been born again. They are the ones who can understand spiritual truth. **1 Corinthians 2:14** reads, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The Greek word for *beloved* is *agapetos*. It is derived from another Greek word, *agapao*, which stands for divine love, a never changing love. Jude wrote this letter to the church—a people whose true love for Christ and truth is unchanging, even in changing times.

The Common Salvation

When I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation. Another translation of this phrase reads, "When I was in the midst of devoting all my energy to writing to you about the faith we all share." Both phrases teach that we will each have the same salvation: it will work in the same manner in all.

The word *common* comes from the Greek word *koinos* and means "shared by all." Concerning doctrinal truths and standards, the *common salvation* will not lead some people in one direction and others in a contrary direction. If that is occurring, something other than real *salvation* is working. Ones may claim it is *salvation*, but if it is not *common*, it is not real.

Unchangeable Word of Truth

Exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Jude wrote this epistle in A.D. 66, only thirty-three years after the Day of Pentecost. His real reason for writing was to reveal that an apostasy was already under way. That which was being presented to the people as salvation and Christianity was not really *the faith* but a cleverly disguised counterfeit.

The words *contend for the faith . . . once delivered unto the saints* hold several truths. One, *the faith* is *delivered*. Truth is not some "vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (**1 Peter 1:18**). It is not something that comes by education but by revelation. Peter spoke concerning prophecy, but this principle is true of all Scriptures: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (**2 Peter 1:21**). The Apostle Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (**2 Timothy 3:16**).

Two, *the faith* has an unchangeable quality. Though man may present other things and try to pass them off as Christianity, true *faith* never changes; it is based in the divine. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." **Hebrews 13:8** says that "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and forever," and

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 2

Malachi 3:6 says, “For I am the LORD, I change not.” Since the Source of Truth is unchanging and settled, so is His truth. **Psalm 119:89** states, “Forever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” *The faith* is still what mankind needs today.

Three, truths was given to *saints*. Notice, the word is *saints* (plural). Truth is not the possession of any one individual: it comes down within the church, it is understood by the church, and the church is responsible to propagate it.

Four, truth must be defended. In the text, the word *contend* actually means “to defend.” *Bagster’s Greek Lexicon* says this word means “to contend strenuously in defense of.” The word Jude used contains the root of our English word *agony*. Defending the Word, or the truth, may not always be easy or comfortable: it may cause some agony. In this day of ease, many do not want to be inconvenienced, but in order to preserve the truth and defend *the faith*, we may suffer much discomfort. However, it is better to be uncomfortable here for a season than for all eternity.

JUST A THOUGHT

Some are contenders; others are pretenders.