

Contending For The Faith

The word “contend” used here is used nowhere else in the Bible. What does it mean to “contend” for something? Does it have anything to do with being “contentious” (*Gk.5380- fond of strife, that is, disputatious*) which is listed only twice (*KJV*)? This lesson from Jude’s writing should help us put to rest any and all misunderstandings of what we are to do as Christians concerning the spread of the Gospel truth.

Jud 1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,...

The brother of James was also a brother of Jesus who shared the same mother, Mary. Contrary to the false teaching concerning Joseph and Mary not having children between themselves after Jesus’ birth, the Bible is clear on Mary not being a perpetual virgin (*Mk 6:3*). Such was common knowledge then. Paul understood it since he knew James.

Gal 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save **James the Lord's brother** (*Gk.80- [the womb]; a brother [they sprang from the same mother]*). (*Emp. added*)

There are many reasons why Jude did not refer to himself as Jesus’ brother but the fact remains he was a half-blood brother to Christ. Even though he didn’t believe Jesus was the Messiah at first, somewhere along the way he finally did.

Joh 7:3 His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. 4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, shew Thyself to the world. 5 For **neither did His brethren** believe in Him. (*Emp. added*)

The following are some reasons from Albert Barnes’ commentary on Jude not crediting himself as the Lord’s brother.

- (1) That the right to do this did not rest on his mere “relationship” to the Lord Jesus, but on the fact that He had called certain persons to be His apostles, and had authorized them to do it; and,
- (2) That a reference to this relationship, as a ground of authority, might have created jealousies among the apostles themselves. We may learn from the fact that Jude merely calls himself “the servant of the Lord Jesus,” that is, a Christian,
 - (a) That this is a distinction more to be desired than, would be a mere natural relationship to the Saviour, and consequently.
 - (b) That it is a higher honor than any distinction arising from birth or family. Compare Mat 12:46-50.

Mat 12:46 While He yet talked to the people, behold, *His mother and His brethren* stood without, desiring to speak with Him. 47 Then one said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy **brethren** stand without, desiring to speak with Thee. 48 But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? 49 And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of My Father Who is in Heaven, the same is My **brother**, and **sister**, and **mother**. (*Emp. added*)

Obviously, Jesus own blood siblings had yet, at that point, to believe in Him. And Mary being referred to as “His mother”, the word “and” would denote a common blood relationship to those who were with her. Thus was Jesus making the distinction between “blood” and “spiritual” family. We can infer also that at this time Joseph was either away, working or possibly even dead. And if Mary was so important to the church and the New Testament why was she not mentioned in any of the epistles as such? The Mary in Rom 16:6 was a different Mary who lived in Rome. Jude now addresses his audience in a familiar approach.

Jud 1 (b)...to them that are sanctified (*Gk.37- to make holy, purify or consecrate*) by God the Father, and preserved (*Gk.5083- to guard [from loss or injury]*) **in** Jesus Christ, and called (*Gk.2822- invited, that is, appointed, or [specifically] a saint*): **2** Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. (*Emp. added*)

Preserved- Where are we guarded? In Christ Jesus. How? Through our sanctification. It is where Christians cannot be condemned as long as we are faithful to our Lord.

Rom 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are **in** Christ Jesus, who **walk not** after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the Law of the Spirit of life **in** Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death. (*Emp. added*)

This letter was addressed to Christians who were in fact the saints of God on earth. Not to those who had been chosen falsely by mere men once alive now dead either.

Rom 1:7 To all that **be** (*presently*) in Rome, beloved of God, **called** (*Gk.2822- appointed*) saints (*Gk.40- sacred [pure, morally blameless, consecrated]*): Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Emp. added*)

Paul's letter was not addressed to dead people! These were living, breathing brethren who were appointed to be such (*sacred*) after they obeyed the Gospel message of salvation. And they are not dead people who became intercessors on the behalf of those claiming to have experienced a miracle because they prayed through them. Why go through a dead person to approach the throne of God (*obviously that wouldn't even be possible*) when you can go through the only Access that presently sits at His right hand?

Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.

In Jude's letter he was very serious about what he had to relate to the church concerning the then present and subsequent future apostasy.

Jud 3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence (*Gk.4710- earnestness: -haste*) to write unto you of the common (*Gk.2839- shared*) salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort (*Gk.3870- invoke [by imploring]*) you that ye should earnestly contend for (*Gk.1864- to struggle for*) the faith which was once (*Gk.530- one [or a single] time*) delivered unto the saints.

- How important it was for Jude to write this! Paul also understood what it meant to be diligent because he had to wrestle with false teaching throughout his ministry.

Gal 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.

“The word here rendered “earnestly contend” is one of those words used by the sacred writers which have allusion to the Grecian games.” Albert Barnes

1Co 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate (*Gk.1467- to exercise self-restraint [in diet and chastity]*) in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

“The reference here, of course, is only to contention by argument, by reasoning, by holding fast the principles of religion, and maintaining them against all opposers. It would not justify “contention” by arms, by violence, or by persecution; because:

- (a) *That is contrary to the spirit of true religion, and to the requirements of the Gospel elsewhere revealed;*
- (b) *It is not demanded by the proper meaning of the word, all that that fairly implies being the effort to maintain truth by argument and by a steady life;*
- (c) *It is not the most effectual way to keep up truth in the world to attempt to do it by force and arms.”* Albert Barnes

As Paul stated in Romans 1:16, how can any Christian be ashamed of the power that set us free? Contending therefore has nothing to do with being **contentious**! The one ensures a positive approach to a discussion while the other goes beyond words to the point of inflicting violence, as in Islam, in order to get converts to its false doctrine. Contending rejects the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition as nothing more than atrocities of a corrupted religious group of apostates. But, obviously, how can we contend for something we know little about? And Satan is adept at taking the truth and twisting it into a believable lie by convincing people down through the ages that they have some new revelation that would enhance, explain or ultimately change the inspired writings of the New Testament. “Once” means “once for all” and as Albert Barnes wrote that *“it is not to be done again, and, therefore, in the sense that it was then complete, and that nothing was to be added to it”*.

Jud 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.

Now his reason for writing. There must have been an extensive amount of false teachers in the first century which has obviously multiplied considerably, seeing the number of denominations in the world today.

2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people (*Israel*), even as there **shall be** false teachers among you (*So sad that as long as the truth has and will be in existence so also the lie.*), who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And

through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. (*Emp. added*)

Thus the purpose in denominating the church, make merchandise of you. Personal gain. What reason other than for those who don't really understand the message of the Gospel to preach it but for their own profit? Ask any televangelist, who's in it for the money, to give up his lavish lifestyle and preach for almost nothing and you will find, at least in those who do so with deceit, that they won't (*unless they truly are deceived in their thinking*). And what other reason can be given for the fact that many don't trust "religion" in general because of these blasphemers of the truth. People have become skeptical of even the truth because of these deceivers.

2Pe 2:20 For if **after they have escaped** the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are **again entangled** therein, and overcome, the **latter end** is worse with them than the beginning. 21 For it had been better for them **not to have known** (*Thayer: to know thoroughly*) the way of righteousness, than, **after they have known it**, to **turn from** the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned (*Gk.1994- to revert: -[re-]turn*) to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. (*Emp. added*)

If there was ever a passage that made futile the false doctrine of "eternal security" it has to be this one. To have escaped the pollutions of the world one would have to of had their sins dealt with via their obedience to the plan of salvation. They knew thoroughly to the point of having experienced Christ's saving grace through their obedience to His will. And how can you return to something that didn't exist in the first place?

2Co 11:13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

The phrase before of old ordained is not to be mistaken as though in eternity God destined these certain individuals to such ends. There are other passages that deal with such. But here it refers to past announcements (*Gk.4270- to write previously*) by those who prophesied that they would come. Compare the following passages that use this phrase.

Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were **written aforetime** were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (*Emp. added*)

Eph 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I **wrote afore** in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (*Emp. added*)

The only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be rendered "only Master, God and Lord, Jesus Christ" (*Interlinear*). And to deny Him is what Thomas did originally after Jesus resurrected.

Joh 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe. 26 And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. 27 Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into My side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto Him, **My Lord and my God.** 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed. (*Emp. added*)

Saying thus was Thomas' way of stating the obvious, that Jesus was God the Son in the flesh. Any teaching that states otherwise, that Jesus was only a prophet on the same level as those before Him or, as in Islam, inferior to Muhammad, would be teaching blasphemy by denying Jesus as the Messiah; by denying His divine nature. But why is it that so many Christians need to be reminded of something that, once forgotten, can only be disastrous to their obtaining an eternal destiny in Heaven?

Jud 5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though **ye once knew this**, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. (*Emp. added*)

The saying stands: "Those who forget the mistakes past are condemned to repeat them" (*or something similar*). This is another example where the Bible does not teach a once-saved-always-saved Gospel. I am eternally secure as long as I am eternally faithful! Just as the apostle Paul didn't rely on his past labors to save him in 1 Cor 9:27, who are we to think anything else?

"Paul felt that even his success was no certain evidence that he would be saved. And if Paul felt thus, who should not feel that after the most distinguished success, he may himself be at last a castaway?"

"He felt that it was necessary to have evidence day by day that he was then a Christian. Of all people, Paul was perhaps Least disposed to live on past experience, and to trust to such experience. Of all people, he had perhaps most reason to trust to such experience; and yet how seldom does he refer to it, how little does he regard it!" Albert Barnes

(*And we've known preachers in our own lifetimes that have slipped into apostasy.*) Sometimes more than not our actions say more than our words. We can talk a good talk but our walk speaks volumes. We may think we don't deny the Lord as Peter did, thinking how we would never have done such, but we forget that we deny Him when our "speech" isn't "always with grace, seasoned with salt" (*Col 4:6*). When we haven't "put off... filthy communication out of [our] mouth" (*Col 3:8*) (*which would include dirty jokes, foul language and the like*) we deny Him. We can't look at the behavior of others before looking into our own mirrors to see if we aren't accusing someone else of the very thing we profess not to be doing ourselves.

Rom 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

Jud 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

If the angels of God, who were once in His presence, lost their preeminence in the only home they ever knew, forfeiting their probationary period through being dissatisfied with such splendor “and voluntarily preferred to change it for another” (*Albert Barnes*), if they were not promised to be able to keep their home just because they were who they were, who then are we to think that our past works will see us to the end? “Oh, but I need a break every now and then!” Okay, so when does that break end? When will Christians get serious about sharing Jesus with a lost and dying world? The judgment is coming. No doubt about it. And such Biblical teachings concerning it aren’t to be understood as being tools that preachers use to keep their congregants under their collective thumbs either. Such has been thought and claimed by infidels for centuries. Maybe in His presence they’ll get the chance to take it up with God in person.

Jud 10 But these speak evil of those things **which they know not**: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. (*Emp. added*)

How often can you go to the on-line edition of the local paper to see responses to the latest editorials and find many who pompously display their ignorance of scripture. And once enlightened they refuse to recognize the truth but consistently repeat their lack of understanding as if the more they state it the more it makes it so. Maybe in their own minds. And how often do we find the lame stream media searching out their so-called “experts” when researching and thus reporting what they want everyone to believe? The press are running and thus ruining the morals of the world. And that’s not news.

Rom 3:10 **As it is written**, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. (*Emp. added*)

In context this was a portion of a letter that Paul wrote concerning the Jews of his day. But have things changed since then for the rest of the world? As Christians, do we not rely on these writings “for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of scripture might have hope” (*Rom 15:4*)?

Jud 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints (*Gk.40- sacred*), **15** To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

Some may teach that Jesus will return with those faithful who have gone to Heaven at death. But according to Jesus’ own words such cannot be the case.

Joh 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, *even* the Son of man Who is in Heaven.

“But what about Enoch and Elijah? I thought they went straight to Heaven.”

Gen 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.

Like those of us who have been “translated into the kingdom of His dear Son” (*Col 1:13*), Enoch was transferred into the spirit realm without having to experience “the sting of death” (*1 Cor 15:55*). “So what about Elijah? Wasn’t he taken up to Heaven?”

2Ki 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven (*Heb.8064- to be lofty; the sky*).

Elijah was taken up, as if by a tornado, in a miraculous event of such unbelief, that it convinced the 50 sons of the prophets on the other side of the Jordan that “The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha” (*v. 15*). Remember, a miracle, as were tongues in 1 Cor 14:22, was “for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not”. Elisha believed. The other 50 were the ones who needed to be convinced. The “chariot” and “horses of fire” were more than likely angels, who took on such forms as they did from time to time.

Psa 104:4 Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire: (*2 Kin 6:17*)

Heb 1:14 Are they (*angels*) not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

And not that Elijah was taken up into the throne-room of God either. He vanished into the clouds and was transferred into the spirit realm as was Enoch.

Jud 16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Paul told the Philippians to “do all things without murmurings” (*Php 2:14*) and adding the act of complaining here only further expresses how sinful it is to whine and complain as though Christians haven’t been blessed enough with the shed blood of our Lord. One thing that Jesus was especially against was making one’s status a way into the grace of God, as though status got God’s attention. Well it did (*and does*), but not in a positive way. Even James spoke out in opposition against such preferences.

Jas 2:1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

Jud 17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; **18** How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

There was a common theme among the writers of the New Testament concerning what to expect in “the last time” (*1 Tim 4:1 “latter times”; 2 Tim 3:1 “last days”; 2 Pet 3:3 “last days”*). These warnings still need to be heeded because they were speaking of the Christian age (*of which we*

are now in) and how many false teachers would be entering in among us. Luke wrote concerning Paul's admonition to "the elders of the church" at Ephesus (*Act 20:17*) that even among themselves such would become a problem.

Act 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all** the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God (*Christ*), which He hath purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also **of your own selves** shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. (*Emp. added*)

How sad it is that within the almost two centuries of the church's existence there have been those who have fulfilled this prophesy. Even in our lifetime. Which is why every member is responsible to "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling" (*Php 2:12*). We can't trust our eternal destiny to fallible men, even if they are among the most godly of leaders. As Jude stated in this letter (*v.3*), having given "all diligence to write" this epistle to warn his readers (*which includes us*) we also are to give thorough attention to God's holy word if we wish to "contend" or "wrestle...against spiritual wickedness in high places" (*Eph 6:12*). Another reason to be as the Bereans who "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (*Act 17:11*). How else can we be able to "fight the good fight, lay hold of eternal life, whereunto [we are] also called, and [have] professed a good profession before many witnessed" (*1 Tim 6:12*)?

Jud 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, **21 Keep yourselves** (*showing our personal responsibility*) in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (*Emp. added*)

What were they to build on? Obviously not on men of smooth speech and deceiving doctrines. But on their "most holy faith". They were to take ownership of the faith as did Paul when it came to the Gospel calling it "my Gospel" in *Rom 2:16*. How often do we use such a personal pronoun in such a positive way? "**My** church family (*not my church because none of us died for her*), **my** Lord, **my** faith, **my** brethren..."

Jud 24 Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, **25** To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

As long as we struggle for the faith, Jesus, as God our Savior, will continue in His part that when we are tempted He "will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that [we] may be able to bear it" (*1 Cor 10:13*). Therefore we trust in His honor, greatness, strength and authority because no other being is eternal, as He alone is. What about you? Do you struggle to understand "the" faith? Are you willing to put aside bias and preconceived ideas to submit to what the Bible says about your salvation?

Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Charli Yana
Updated 1/27/24

www.truthdiscovered.net

