Contend to the End

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Date: 04 May 2026

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[0:00] Well, Jude, by now we have figured out, was an accomplished author who wrote this brief book as a warning to the church concerning the apostates.

That it infiltrated the church, the infant church in his day, and were making attempts to destroy the fellowship and worship of true believers.
And Jude stands as sort of a blueprint for how to deal with apostasy and apostates. And they're still with us in buckets, unfortunately.
In our day, I would call them the descendants of these apostates have infiltrated the church with a geometric progression.
I would have to say there are more apostates, false teachers, and false preachers on planet earth today than all the previous centuries combined.
[1:21] Of course, we have a lot more people too. Jude, John, and other New Testament writers predicted that in the end times, apostasy would grip and plague the church.

John told us very clearly that we are in the end times. In fact, he described it as this is the last hour. That's how John described it, by inspiration.
And he said, we're in the end times. And we've seen and bear witness to the fact that apostasy and apostates abound in the closing days of the church age.
The gripping apostasy is one of the signs that Christ's return for His church is imminent. In fact, prophecy, eschatology talks about the departure among Christian people.
I read a statistic last week that just flabbergasted me. But it's like 15,000 people are leaving their church a week in America.
[2:36] And they're not necessarily going anywhere else. I guess going to the lake. But apostasy is a real problem. It stands as one of the signs of the return of Christ.

I came up with a kind of a unique title for tonight. Contend to the end. Because we're supposed to contend for the faith.
Let's make sure as brothers in Christ we contend until the end. The true church over the centuries has been bonded together by doctrine.
Doctrine is what the Bible teaches and what we believe. It's what the Bible reveals. One minister I like said, Doctrine is the glue that holds us all together.
And there are many marvelous doctrines in the Word of God. And they're all precious to the redeemed. But one doctrine that really is head and shoulders, I think, above the rest, is the doctrine of eternal security.
[4:01] More accurately known as perseverance of the saints. And more accurately known than that as the preservation of the saints.

That's my favorite. Perseverance was one of the cardinal pillars in the 1500s in Holland, the country of Holland, on the church.
And actually I think they called it perseverance. But that implies to me that if we do enough work we can persevere. I think preservation is better.
We're preserved by God. We're preserved by the Spirit of God and preserved by Christ. So I like to call it preservation.
And all the doctrines in God's Word are beautiful. You have justification, regeneration, conversion, adoption into God's family.
[5:02] There's a lot more than that. But without the assurance and confidence we find in the doctrine of eternal security, the Christian would be filled with doubt, and worry and fear as to what the future holds for the individual.

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It is unthinkable to me that Christ would command us to come to Him, embrace Him, pick up our cross and follow Him, and after doing so we could somehow mess it up at the end and be lost for eternity.
If you're a true follower, and it's a shame in our day we have to add words like that, true. If you're a true follower of Christ, don't worry.
Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is found in Christ Jesus.
And I would suggest that you read Romans 8, verses 28 to 39. I'm a real fan of Derek Thomas.
[6:17] He's from Wales. I've been there. Got that beautiful accent. He lives in South Carolina.
Was for years a professor down there at one of the Reformed seminaries.

He's a wonderful man. I dearly love him. And he refers to Romans 8 as the greatest chapter in the Bible. That's how he describes it.
He may be right. I mean, you start with verse 1, no condemnation, and you end in the end with verse 39 or so at that section of no separation.
You go from no condemnation to no separation. That's pretty weighty. Pretty weighty. Look at Romans 8 tonight, not in here, but when you get home and read verses 38 to 39.
It's amazing. In fact, the faith that Christ has given us will ultimately produce an eternal weight of glory far beyond any comparison.
[7:22] And by the way, that's 2 Corinthians 4.17. So it's fitting that Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, which he never mentions, by the way, but the half-brother of Jesus closes out, I mean, he never mentions it in Jude, closes out his great warning to the church about apostasy by reassuring the true church that they are safe in the arms of Jesus.

And this is how the Spirit of God working through Jude, through his literary skills, closes the last two verses of Jude.
Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless, with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.
Amen. There's a great truth about salvation and many of our Arminian friends don't have that assurance and don't seem to be the ones I know willing to come to grips with it.
And I love this statement. It's certainly not original with me. We did not attain salvation. salvation.
And we cannot maintain salvation.
[9:23] It's a work of God and a continuing work of God. We attained it from God and we maintain it because God wants us to maintain it. So we receive salvation by the grace of God through Christ and then we are maintained by that same grace.

Now, if it were up to us to keep it, we would falter after about one second. It's just the way things are.
We cannot even keep the great commandment for a tenth of a second. love God with all. And then he goes on from there. We live in unredeemed flesh and we battle sin continually.
I heard Dr. MacArthur who is now with the Lord but I heard him say one time he's very attracted to the concept of leaving here and going to heaven.
Well, he's done that. but he said I'm not overly interested in pearly gates and transparent gold streets.
[10:50] He said I may be fascinated with those things for about 20 minutes but he said the fascinating concept for me about heaven is to be in a place of no sin.

No sin. And I have to say that's pretty inviting. But we live in unredeemed flesh. We battle sin continually.
And the great apostle Paul that we would label as the greatest Christian that ever lived described himself as the chief of sinners and a wretched man.
Oh, wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this bondage of death. So true salvation is not based upon the work of man.
It's based upon the work of Christ. We are covered by His righteousness. He covers us.
[11:58] We do not cover ourselves. Our salvation is actually based upon the plan of God which you read about in Romans 8, 29 and 30.

It's based upon the promise of God which we read about in Hebrews 10, 23. It's based upon the power of God which we read about in Romans 1, 16.

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And then the provision of God, 2 Corinthians 5, 21. So Jude closes out his letter with a doxology underscoring God's preserving work in his children.
Now, a doxology in Scripture typically focuses on the glory and the grace of God and can be seen as an offering of praise and of thankfulness for the blessing of eternal life given to us by grace.
And Paul offered one of the most amazing and familiar doxologies in the New Testament at the conclusion of the great book of Romans.
[13:30] This is how he ends that book with this doxology. Now, to him who is able, I mean, you could just dwell on those words.

Now, to him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandments of the eternal God has been made known to all the nations leading to obedience of faith to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be the glory forever.
Amen. So, in Jude's book, we receive horrific warnings about encroaching and approaching apostasy.
And then Jude finishes with a doxology of comfort and encouragement whereby God reminds us that He is all-powerful, He's all-faithful, to keep His promises and in spite of the unbelief that literally permeates many churches, we have every reason to be confident in the future.
Our confidence is or should be based upon two revealed truths concerning what God will do for His children.
[15:29] truth one, He will preserve His beloved saints. And truth two, God will present us blameless before the throne.

Now, the preservation of the saints. Now, to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling. I'm glad about that because I stumble all the time on my legs.
God in the Old Testament was called El Shaddai. That means He is the Almighty God. That's what that word means. As Almighty God, He has perfect faith, infinite power, and unchanging love.
When God saves a person, He saves them to the uttermost. And God is never going to allow one of His redeemed saints to fall away from saving faith.
He's not going to do it. This is the faith that He has given them. It's not their faith. For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves.
[16:56] It is the gift of God. I heard Dr. MacArthur in a discussion or a debate and this guy said, well, what about your faith? It's not yours. He said, that was given to you by God.

And he quoted Ephesians 2, 8, and 9. But God saves to the uttermost. Additionally, God will never allow one of His redeemed to defect finally from the gospel and be lost in their sin for eternity.
Now, let me tell you, we may get to heaven buffered and bruised. Our garments may be singed, but we'll get there. God is both willing and able to preserve His saints to the very end of time and then beyond.
Beyond that. But if there's any doubt in your mind as to being secure in the sovereignty of God, listen to these words. I love John's gospel, especially chapter 6.
verse 37 to 40. All that the Father gives me will come to me.
[18:18] That's pretty emphatic. All that the Father gives me will come to me. And the one who comes to me, I will certainly not cast out.

for I've come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. This is the will of Him who sent me, that all He has given me, I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.
For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, Greek word pistou, trusts, obeys, strong word, all who believe in Him will have eternal life.
And I myself will raise Him up on the last day. Now these are powerful words depicting the ultimate security and preservation of the true believer.
even the present day ministry of Christ speaks to our eternal security in Him. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that Christ is at this very moment interceding for us before the throne of the Father.
[19:46] If anyone truly saved is ultimately lost, then the Father rejected the intercessory prayers of His Son. And brothers, that's unthinkable.

God would never do that to His Son. I mean, why is Jesus interceding for someone that He knows will ultimately be lost? That just doesn't equate.

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Our Jude passage tells us that the Lord is able to keep us from stumbling. in the Greek language the word to keep is a military term.
It means to guard or to watch over. Like a good soldier, God the Holy Spirit is always present standing guard over His children to ensure our ultimate safety.
This is true even when the enemy is assaulting. It is God who keeps us from stumbling into apostasy.
[20:55] Listen to the words of the great shepherd John 10, another great chapter. John 10 verses 27 to 29.

John 10 strong.
Strong language. Now time does not allow us to cover all of God's promises concerning our security in Him.
We could do that over a multi-month study, maybe years, but such is the overwhelming magnitude of the promises of God.
It is He who establishes us in Himself. the enemy attacks us, but it is God who perfects us. This is, in all of this, a point that needs to be made.
[22:19] Never is eternal security a license to sin. sin. We have no license to sin. Our security in Christ really is the freedom not to sin.

Show me a man or a woman who believes they can sin all they want because they've been saved by grace and I will show you a person who does not truly believe because they've never been saved by grace.
salvation is never a license to sin. It's the liberty not to. Now, before we were saved, we sinned because of our nature.
After we are saved, our sin is by choice. we could choose to sin, but we're in sin if we do that.
Does this mean that we don't sin? Of course not. I heard Dr. Sproul one time say that he opened every morning, he had a big dining room table and he had this blanket that was fit perfectly under it and he would drape it over the table and it would drop down and his wife knew where he was at, he wasn't going to scare her.
[23:38] And his kids were grown. And he got over there and he prayed for two hours. And he prayed following the acts, give accolades to God, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

And he said, but when we sin, we sin because we choose to. We never sin because we have to. anyone who says they don't sin is a liar.
First John, chapter one, and makes God out to be a liar because he says we do sin. But when we sin, we have an advocate.
That's a defense attorney, by the way. we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one, who is atoned for that sin and made it right before God.
And now a final truth. The Lord presents the saints. Starting in the middle of verse 24 to verse 25 of Jude, he will make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless.
[25:06] I'd like to spend an hour blameless, blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, and again, be glory, majesty, dominion, authority, before all time and now and forever.

Amen. Mark this down in your mental file. Genuine saving faith endures to the end.
It's an enduring faith. To make your stand is from one Greek word, and it means to set, to present, to confirm, or to establish.
Please listen to my next statement because it's almost poetically beautiful. Right now, if you're saved, and I can't imagine anyone that'd stick around my teaching if they're not, right now we stand in grace.
One day we will stand in glory. Church members in the 21st century have an image that we go skipping into the presence of God.
[26:27] And this is not how God's mighty saints reacted when they came into the presence of the Lord. Consider some facts. Isaiah came into the presence of the Lord and pronounced a curse on himself.

Remember that? Woe is me, I'm undone. Ezekiel came into the presence of God and fell over like a dead man.
Peter, James, and John saw the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration and they fainted. John saw the risen and glorified Christ on the Isle of Patmos and he wrote about it and said, I became like a

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dead man.
Why did these men react in this manner? Once they were in the presence of the Lord, they were so overwhelmed by the glory of God and by their own sinfulness and sense of unworthiness.
They fell down to the ground. To stand in the presence of the Lord, we must be blameless. We must be in a sinless state.
[27:51] And for the unbeliever who has rejected God's way of salvation, heaven is an impossibility. But listen to what Revelation 21-27 says.

Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into heaven, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
As believers in heaven, we will never experience any terror of entering into God's presence. When I was a child, growing up about three blocks that way, I always played as late as I possibly could get by with it.
We just loved the whole neighborhood boys we would play. And my parents would call out. Sometimes it was my mom because my dad was in the Middle East with Phillips, but often it was my dad also he would call.
And I went. And never once did I fear being called home by my mom or my dad.
[29:11] Well, in heaven we will experience great joy of the Lord calling us by name to come into his presence.

And we will dwell with God in perfect love, perfect holiness. So Jude closes out this great book of warning really with the message of present salvation and future glorification.
One day every believer will be presented blameless before the throne. I have to think about this because I don't consider myself very blameless.
But I didn't make the rules. The Lord did. Charles Spurgeon referred to as the Prince of Preachers, the great Baptist preacher, summed it up beautifully.
He preached this at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. He preached this on January 8, 1874. That's 142 years ago. This is Reverend Spurgeon.
[30:26] When I heard it said that the Lord would keep His people right to the end, that Christ had said, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.

I must confess that the doctrine of final preservation of the saints was a bait that my soul could not resist. I thought it was a sort of life insurance, an insurance of my character, an insurance for my soul, an insurance of my eternal destiny.
I knew that I could not keep it myself, but if Christ promised to keep me, then I would be safe forever.
And I longed, and I prayed to find Christ, because I knew that if I found Him, He would not give me a temporary salvation, such as some preach today.
but He would give me eternal life, which could never be lost. The living and incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever, for no one and nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
[32:04] And with that, let's close with a word of prayer. Father, thank You for Your grace and for Your mercy, for Your book of Jude, short, 25 verses, packed with great truth.

Lord, to be with my brothers through the summer, bring us out on the morning breakfasts we're going to have, and those dates have been and will be announced in the future. And Lord, gather us all the Monday after Labor Day, and we can once again enjoy Your words and learn to live by them and with them.
I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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