

Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints

An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

Chapter 3- The Common Salvation **Jude 3**

9. The Common Salvation- Part 1

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Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse journey through the Epistle of **Jude** and today I want to begin a new section of study and look at what Jude taught about, "The Common Salvation" so let's open our Bibles and read **Jude 3** together:

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Now notice in this third verse that Jude said that he had started out to write this letter to the Church about the "**Common Salvation**", but that as he began to write- the Holy Spirit had strongly showed Jude that it was a "**necessity**" that he stop writing about the "**Common Salvation**", and that he write this Epistle to the Church and tell the Church that they must:

... contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

And Lord willing, we will get into exactly what Jude said about us contending earnestly for the faith in future broadcasts- But what did Jude *mean* here when he says the "**Common Salvation**"?

Now during the days of the Apostles; during the time when those who had actually seen Jesus and who had been with Him when He died and had seen Him after His Resurrection and who had been taught by the Lord for forty days after His Resurrection and who had literally seen Jesus ascend up into heaven, and also those Apostles

who came after the twelve like Paul and Apollos- during those days- there was absolutely no confusion about what the Church of Jesus believed and what the Church of Jesus taught.

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles 2:42 gives us insight into what went on in the Church of the first century among those who were saved. The Bible says:

42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

So when the Bible says that the Church had “**all things common**” in verse 44- that doesn't mean that everybody in the Church dressed alike or that they all used the same words or that they all liked the same foods. No, the Bible is referring to those things that mattered the most. Notice in verse 42, that the Bible says that the Church had four things that were “common” or four things that distinguished them from everybody else on earth:

1. They continually devoted themselves to the Apostle's Teaching
2. Godly Fellowship
3. The Breaking of Bread
4. Prayer

So, all of those who had believed and who were saved and who made up the visible Church in the first Century all had four things “common” or alike among them. No one in the Church dared to be at odds with one another about these four issues because these four issues were critical to having a Church that has Christ as the Head.

Now the first thing that God's Word says that the early Church had common among them was that saved people continually devoted themselves to something that Dr. Luke called, “The Apostle's Teaching”. And they continued in the Apostle's Teaching in the sense that they were consistent in it; they were ongoing in it. So from this we know that the Doctrine of the early Church was not haphazard; it

was not vague; and it didn't change. It was a body of very precise teaching that was both learnable and teachable.

So people back then didn't make up what they believed as they went along. No one in the Church felt that they had the right to believe whatever they wanted to believe- but they were all taught that one single Doctrine that had been given to the Apostles by God the Holy Spirit through direct Divine Revelation.

You see, dear friends, the Apostle's teaching was supernaturally revealed to those whom God chose to set up the Church and it was established and orchestrated by God and it was ordained by God; and it was right; and it was correct; and it was rock solid; and it was holy.

So during the time that the Apostles set up the Church, Truth was not something that was a matter of opinion. Peter and John and James and Paul and the others were commissioned by God in similar fashion as were the Old Testament Prophets. They were specially ordained and specially gifted and specially anointed to pen down what God was saying about the issues of God and the issues of godliness and the issues of life. And so what they wrote was as equally inspired and God breathed as was that which the Old Testament writers wrote.

Now the difference between what the Apostles wrote in the NT and what the Prophets and Moses and David had written in the Old is that what the Apostles wrote was the completed, full, and final Revelation of God to Man. What the Old Testament writers wrote was absolutely true and it was from God- but it was in part; it was a type or a shadow of the fullness of God contained in carnal ordinances and a tabernacle here on the earth.

So what God the Holy Spirit in giving the Apostles their inspired Epistles was to give the explanation; or the exposition; or the complete understanding; or the final Revelation of what the Old Testament writers meant- by what *they* wrote. So this gives us a very important concept that we all need to know when reading and studying the Bible today.

If you are going to correctly and fully understand what the Old Testament says- then you must read and study the Old Testament through the lens or with the understanding of- the New Testament Epistles. If you read the Old Testament or even the Gospels without at least having a working knowledge of what God the Holy Spirit

revealed to the Apostles through the 21 New Testament *Epistles*- you will get off base in your doctrine real quick.

This is why in our day we have all of these little so- called “messianic” cults springing up everywhere. These people are trying to understand the Old Testament- especially the first five Books of the Bible- without the knowledge of the final Revelation given by God in the 21 Epistles of the New Testament. So these people are not Jews who have gone up the mountain to become Christians- these people are Christians who are going back down the mountain to become Jews. And even though many of these people mean well- they have nonetheless denied the Christian Faith and are in jeopardy for their souls.

Until the Apostles began to pen down the New Testament- all of Holy Scripture was contained in the 39 Books of the Old Testament. But once God had inspired and ordained the Apostles to pen down their inspired writings- the 27 Books of the New was added to the Old Testament and the 66 Books were collectively called, “the Scriptures”. So for example- when Paul said in **2Timothy 3:16&17:**

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

... Paul was rightly saying that those Writings which comprise the New Testament were of equal value; equal importance; equal Divine inspiration as were those writings that made up the Old Testament. The difference is- that the 21 New Testament Epistles are the guiding rule which gives us the proper understanding of all that God had spoken before and all that Jesus did while He was here on the earth.

So from these 27 Books- the 21 Epistles; the four Gospels; the diary of the first 30 years of the Church; and the Book of the Revelation- that collectively make up what we call the New Testament and which is joined with the 39 Old Testament Books- all of this is what Luke called “the Apostle’s Teaching”.

And Jesus Himself had promised this when He prophesied to Peter, James, John, and the rest in **John 14:26:**

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He

will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Now Jesus was speaking to the Apostles here- He was *not* talking to you and me in this verse. Jesus was telling these particular men that when the Holy Spirit came upon them that He- God the Holy Spirit- would teach these men exactly what God meant by what God had spoken- thousands of years earlier to Moses and to David and to the prophets and that He- the Holy Spirit- would give the Apostles the correct and full explanation about all the Old Testament writers had written down about Jesus- even though the Old Testament writers didn't even fully understand what they had written.

And this full and final explanation and revelation from God to Man was penned down for us and preserved for us in the 21 New Testament Epistles- which were called the "teaching Books" of the early Church.

Before God gave the NT Epistles- the teaching Books of the Holy Scriptures were the first five Books of the Bible. But after the full and completed Revelation of God was given through the Apostles- the 21 Epistles became the final Authority of God because they explained what the shadows and the types and the figures and the incomplete Revelation of the first five Books spoke about.

And this is why there was such great persecution in the early Church from the Jews. The Jews looked at Christianity as attacking Moses- which it was not. True Biblical Christianity doesn't *attack* what Moses wrote at all- it *completes* what Moses wrote.

But even to this day- most Jews still have the veil over their face. And I understand that. But what I do *not* understand and what is so tragic is that people who were raised in the Church could be so deceived to think that by rejecting the final and complete Revelation of God through Jesus Christ in the New Testament and returning to a partial and vague and inferior Revelation of Moses in the Old- that somehow that is a good thing.

So, when the Bible says that those who were saved and who were in the Church continually devoted themselves to the Apostle's Teaching - the Bible is telling us that the Church held regular and consistent and in depth and serious and line upon line, and precept upon precept, studies of the Bible. They wanted to know what God said. They wanted to *understand* what God said. So, they read, and

they studied the Old Testament and then they read one or more of the New Testament Epistles- or they sat and listened as John or Peter or Paul or one of the other Apostles explained what they were reading. Or if one of the Apostles could not physically be there. And they did that so they could fully understand what God meant by what He had spoken in the Old.

Now it is wrong to say- and I am certainly not saying- that we do not need the Old Testament- that is *not* what I am saying. But what I *am* saying is that unless you read the Old Testament through the lens or with the understanding of the New Testament Epistles- you will get off base real quick.

And the proof that I am right about this lies in the fact that the longer that you exclude New Testament Revelation from your diet- you will come to the place where you deny the inspiration of some or most of the New Testament Books; you will deny the Deity of Jesus Christ; the Trinity; Justification by Faith alone; Original Sin; Human Depravity and other essential Doctrines that you need to be saved.

No, the saints in the early Church knew what they believed and so they could smell false doctrine and heresy a mile off. They devoted themselves continually to the Apostle's Teaching and they were not drawn away by the latest and greatest pronouncements coming from the snake oil salesmen- who promised them everything as long as they kept those monthly pledges coming in.

Beloved, imagine this. Not one saint in the early church was confused about Who Jesus was. No one was confused about the Doctrine of the Trinity. Not one member of the early Church was bewildered about whether shacking up was a sin. Everyone in the Church knew what God's Will was concerning marriage and about loving their wives, and about raising children and about how to run a business and about how to handle money and about how to pray and about how to live a godly life. How did all of them know this? They devoted themselves continually to the Apostle's Teaching.

Well, I've got to stop right here- but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **Jude**. May God help us all.

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