

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

## An Expositional Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

### Chapter 16- Winning Souls in an Age of Apostasy **Jude 22-23**

### 195 Winning Souls in an Age of Apostasy Part 7

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WOSM Tuesday 08/05/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the **Epistle of Jude** and today we are going to continue to examine what Jude taught about "How to Win Souls in an Age of Apostasy." So, let's read **Jude 22& 23** again together:

**22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;  
23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.**

Now on the last broadcast- we were discussing just how fear was used by God in the Bible to do what Jude says here in verse 23 and pull them out of the fire of sin and temptation by looking at a very fascinating account that Dr. Luke wrote in **The Acts 5:1-11**- so let's read that account together:

**1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,  
2 and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.  
3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?  
4 "While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."  
5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.  
6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.**

**7** Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

**8** And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price."

**9** Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*."

**10** And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

**11** And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

Now in verse 23 of **Jude**- he tells us this bit of information:

**save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.**

And here in **The Acts 5**- we see a real life example of what Jude is talking about. Here two people who were in the Church plotting and schemed to defraud God and the church by making it look like they gave everything when in fact they only gave a portion.

Now as we studied on the last broadcast- we need to know several very important aspects about this passage.

1. Both the man and the woman conspired to lie. So, from this we know that the man did not force the woman to lie- she was a willing accomplice. And we also can know that this was not a mistake or an accident. This act by Ananias and Sapphira was a well thought out, premeditated attempt at deception.
2. Both the man and the woman were perfectly willing to accept the thanks and gratitude from the Church for doing something that they really didn't do.
3. When Peter confronted them- they both continued to lie, and they both continued to try to deceive and cover it up- showing that they were not convicted at all about this sin, and they made no attempt

at all to repent.

4. When the instant and deadly judgment came from God as a result of their wickedness- neither the Grace nor the Mercy of Jesus Christ prevented the judgment from falling.
5. When the man fell down dead right in the middle of the Church- the Church service went right on, and the Bible says that it continued on for another three hours after he had died before his wife came in; and then she lied to God, and she also was judged by God.

Now what was the result of all of this? Read with me **The Acts 5:11:**

**And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.**

So not only did this sudden and deadly judgment affect the people of the church- but it also scared the people outside the Church as well. And as we discussed on the last broadcast- this passage proves to us that Godly, reverential fear keeps us focused on what really matters to God.

You see, God would have been perfectly justified in judging a thousand people that day in **Acts 5**. Ananias and Sapphira were not the only people who were plotting to deceive. They were not the only ones who were lying to God. Ananias and Sapphira were judged instantly and publicly so that all the other people who were either lying or thinking about lying would remember that God is listening, and God was watching.

So, when you look at it that way- the sudden and certain death of Ananias and Sapphira was actually God issuing mercy on all the other people who were just as guilty as Ananias and Sapphira were by causing great fear to rise in *their* hearts and to keep them from doing the very same thing.

So, any time God brings forth visible and public judgment in the earth- this is God's way of reminding all of us that He is watching us too

and that we must take heed to ourselves and repent quickly so that this does not come our way. Ananias and Sapphira were not the only people who were guilty of lying that day. In fact, their sin may not have been as bad as what someone else was doing. That's not the reason that they were judged.

Ananias and Sapphira were absolutely guilty of sinning against God- there is no doubt about that. But as we know- God doesn't always judge us immediately when we sin- does He? No, God is full of mercy and many times wrath and judgment that we deserve is withheld from us. That is not a sign that what we did was okay or that God is weak or that sin doesn't matter- not at all.

That act of Mercy in God withholding the judgment that we deserve is simply God giving us space to repent. Sadly, many people get bold when God doesn't immediately judge them, and they get the notion that they are okay or that God doesn't care because they didn't die. But God does care, and rest assured that judgment is coming. But God allows us space to come to our senses and to beg Him for forgiveness and turn from our sins.

But periodically- God unleashes His fury and wrath against sin in a very dramatic and public way. What we call natural disasters and plagues and famines and even war and murders are all signs that God is angry with our sin and that we should bow and repent. And so, God is merciful holding back his fury based upon His Own Wisdom.

For example- God may give one man five chances while He may only give another man- one. God does not treat men the same. Moses struck the rock one time God refused to let him go into the Promised Land and took his life while Jonah sat and argued with God for days.

We must remember that every sin that we commit is worthy of eternal death so never get the idea that God has to be fair or that He has to treat everybody the same. God is not fair. God is holy and Right and True and Just and Merciful- but God is not fair- and you really don't want God to be fair. Fair would be that we get what we deserve, and I really don't think that we want that.

So, since God would be correct to immediately judge everyone on earth right now because we are all guilty and He doesn't do that because of Mercy- then when God does periodically bring forth swift and public Judgment- that is because of two things:

1. Rest assured that those who were judged deserved it
2. Everybody else who is just as guilty as the ones who were judged have godly reverential fear struck into their hearts and they feel led to repent.

Public and Visible Judgment reminds us all that God is watching and that God is serious and that we need to fear Him if we are to love Him. And public and Visible Judgment on the few who are guilty is God's tool of Mercy and Grace on the many who are equally guilty to repent or face His wrath.

So, the correct response to this visible and public judgment is fear-godly reverential fear that is well able to modify our behavior; well able to change the way we live; well able to bring us to our knees; and well able to keep us from sin.

Now some would say at this point- *"I just don't believe this. This is terrible. I don't want to think that my God would operate like this."* And I would respond to that by saying that this act of public and swift judgment by God was in reality an act of mercy. It was mercy towards all the *other* people who were thinking about doing the very same thing that Ananias and Sapphira did and the fear of God which came as a direct result of this judgment brought repentance to them and they were able to escape judgment.

And I would agree with these people that perhaps the god that they have invented in their own mind and hearts would not do this. But the God of the Bible- the Father of Jesus Christ- did operate like this. And some would say that this is no way for God to act and nobody would ever come to Church if this is what happened. I mean, who in their right mind would *ever* want to go to Church and serve God if they thought that God acted like this?

Ah, but my brothers and sisters, if you think like this- you would be wrong again. Let's read what Luke wrote that happened as a result of God publicly and visibly bring judgment against sin and bringing great fear upon sinner and saint alike in **The Acts 5:14**:

**And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*,**

So, we can see that this great fear brought about by public and

visible judgment was one of the best evangelistic tools that the New Testament Church employed. You see, dear friends, because God honored His own Righteousness and publicly and visibly judged sin; and because great fear came upon those in and out of the Church- the Bible says that God was glorified, and believers were the more added to the Lord- multitudes both of men and women.

So, Jude was right about what he said in verse 23 and fear is an effective tool to us for some in order to pull them out of the fire of deception and false teaching.

Well, I have 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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