

It is every justified saint’s **PRIVILEGE** and **RESPONSIBILITY** to use **ALL THE BIBLICAL MEANS** God has graciously provided to equip themselves to “*earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.*” Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, of whom John wrote – “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth*”(Jn.1:14) was declared as “*Immanuel*” (**GOD WITH US**), to have “*increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*”(Lk.2:52) Listen to **YLT** – “and Jesus was advancing in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and men.” The writer of Hebrews reproved the Hebrew believers for their lack of growth in grace and knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus – “*Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing. For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*”(Heb.5:11-15) **Keep this in mind:** All the Apostles (**with the exception of Paul**) were common men with little or no education, yet they followed Christ’s command to His church: “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*”(II Tim.2:15) Consider Stephen’s **contending for the faith** – “*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers [did], so [do] ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept [it].*”(Acts 7:51-52) Although none of these men were trained up in theological seminaries, they were “*taught of God*”, and being “*taught of God*”, they in turn used the means God graciously gave them to diligently prepare themselves to “*earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*”. They also encouraged those who believed on Christ through the Gospel they declared to do so as well – “*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*”

With the way Jude begins his admonition – “**BELOVED**” – it reveals to us that his words of instruction were for those he had just declared to be those “*sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.*” Jude wasn’t writing these words of admonition to moral, sincere, dedicated, work based or reformed religious sinners, but to saints like those to whom Peter wrote: “*Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, **TO THEM THAT HAVE OBTAINED LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH WITH US** through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*”(II Pet.1:1) It is to those who are “*in the faith*” that Jude makes clear his purpose in writing this epistle to them – “*when I gave all diligence to write **unto you** of the **COMMON SALVATION.***” I believe Jude’s words are similar to the words Paul wrote to those at Phillipi – “*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. **To write the same things to you, to me indeed [is] not grievous, but for you [it is] safe.***”(Phil.3:1) Jude’s words make it clear that the Holy Spirit’s purpose for inspiring this epistle concerned that which is most important to all those “*born of God*”, namely “*the **COMMON SALVATION.***” **The question we need to ask and answer is this:** What

did Jude mean by “*the common salvation*”? By these words Jude was talking about the Gospel and what God’s Gospel reveals to all God’s elect. The original word translated “*the common*” means ‘shared by all’. The original word translated “*salvation*” means ‘rescue, safety, or deliver’. It is a **form of the word** the angels spoke to the shepherds – “*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David **A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD.***”(Lk.2:8-11) Jude was talking about the MEANS by which the all God’s elect are **DELIVERED** from death and eternal condemnation – the declaration of our Lord Jesus Christ’s **PERSON** and **HIS WORK**, who is **SHARED BY ALL GOD’S ELECT IN EVERY GENERATION**. When Old Simeon held Christ in His arms, he declared Christ to be **HIS DELIVERER** – “*For mine eyes have seen **thy salvation.***”(Lk.2:30) Our Lord Jesus Christ declared **HIMSELF** to be the “*common salvation*” to one of His sheep when He walked up under that tree in Jericho and declared to Zaccheus – “*This day **is salvation** come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. **For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.***”(Lk.19:9,10) Peter stated it this way – “*This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there **salvation** in any other: for there is **none other name** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*”(Acts 4:11,12) This truth concerning the **REVELATION** of this **PERSON** – “*Jesus Christ*” - is common to all God’s elect – “*I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And **other sheep I have**, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and **they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold,** [and] **one shepherd.***”(Jn10:14-16) John Gill wrote this in his commentary on these words – “To all the elect of God, and true believers in Christ; the love of God is common to them all alike; the choice of them to eternal salvation is the same; the covenant of grace, the blessings and promises of it, are equally shared by them; and they are bought with the same price of Christ's blood, and are justified by the same righteousness, and are regenerated, sanctified, and called by the same grace, and shall possess the same glory: there is but one way of salvation, and that is not confined to any nation, family, community, or sect among men.” By diligently writing to these believing saints concerning “*the common salvation*”, Jude was fulfilling His role as an Apostle – “*And He gave **SOME, APOSTLES; AND SOME, PROPHETS; AND SOME, EVANGELISTS; AND SOME, PASTORS AND TEACHERS;** For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*”(Eph.4:11-16) Do you see the importance of a constant reminder to us all concerning “*the common salvation*” we have been freely given in Christ?

On the heels of this encouraging and thoughtful reminder, Jude exhorts them: “*It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once*

delivered unto the saints.” Let me read you a literal translation – “I had necessity to write to you, exhorting to agonize for the faith once delivered to the saints.” We need to keep in mind that in **Vss.4-19** the Apostle deals with **TWO DISTINCT CLASSES** of people, the **REPROBATE**, revealing their character, as well as their disdain for the “*common salvation*”, and the Lord’s people who “*are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.*” Jude told them and US that “*It was needful for me to write to you and to exhort you.*” The word translated “*needful*” means ‘must needs or necessary’. As an apostle, just like Paul, Jude “*kept back nothing that was profitable*” to these to whom he wrote this epistle of warning. Not only did he write to them, but he was also tells us his purpose was to “*exhort you.*” The original word he used here means ‘to beseech, intreat, or **CALL FOR**’. This lets us know that whatever he is about to beseech, intreat, or **CALL FOR** them to do isn’t a request, but an Apostolic admonition they were to obey.

What was it he called for these believing saints, as well as every believer in every generation to do – “*that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” The phrase “*ye should earnestly contend*” is **ONE WORD** in the Greek which mean ‘to struggle for’. We get our English word “**AGONIZE**” from it. What he was calling for believers to do isn’t an easy matter, but one which requires preparation and a determination on the part of the justified saint - “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*”(II Tim.2:15) What are we to **AGONIZE** or **STRUGGLE FOR** – “*the faith which WAS ONCE DELIVERED to the saints.*” I want to state this as **SIMPLY** and **CLEARLY** as I can so there will be no misunderstanding concerning the Apostle’s meaning – He was calling on **BELIEVERS** (those he called “**SAINTS**”) to **AGONIZE** or **STRUGGLE** for “*the FAITH which was once delivered to the saints.*” I’d point out to you that **WHATEVER** this “*faith*” is for which he called on us to earnestly contend for, **IT WAS DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS BUT ONCE** – **DO YOU SEE THAT?** The phrase “*which was once*” means ‘one or A **SINGLE TIME**’. The word translated “*delivered*” means ‘to bring forth or deliver up’. Jude’s language is similar to Paul’s words to the believers at Rome – “*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*”(Rom.6:17) Here’s an important question: What does the true and living God use to set His people free? Our text tells us plainly - “*the faith once delivered unto the saints.*” “*The FAITH*” is speaking of **the Gospel message** the Lord uses to call His people from darkness to light. This **ONE PASSAGE** settles forever what we are to “*earnestly contend for*” – “*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **BY WHICH ALSO YE ARE SAVED**, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I **DELIVERED (SAME WORD JUDE USED)** unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”(I Cor.15:1-4) Paul told those at Thessalonica – “*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and **belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel**, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”(II Thess.2;13,14) Paul meant and lived by what he wrote in **I Cor.2:2** – “*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*” He meant and lived by what he wrote to those at Galatia – “*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.*”(Gal.6:14) We are to earnestly contend for that by which the true and living God **SET US FREE** – “*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*”(Rom.8:2) As*

justified, regenerated, and converted children of God, we should be proficient in those doctrines by which the Spirit “*hath made me free from the law of sin and death*”, those truths which glorify and honor God in every attribute of His character as “*both a just God and a Savior*.” Mr. Hawker stated simply and concisely what Jude meant by “*the faith once delivered to the saints*” and our contention for that same faith – “It is speaking of the great and leading doctrines of the Gospel, in the everlasting love of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, more or less, are in every page. The Person, glory, blood shedding, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, with redemption only in his blood, and regeneration only by God the Holy Ghost; these are the bottom, and foundation of all our mercies. To contend for these, and with earnestness, is to contend for the very life of our souls. An indifferency, or coldness to the open profession of these glorious truths in ourselves, or to the denial of them in others, is wounding the Redeemer, in the house of his friends. It is high treason to the Majesty of God. It is traitorously admitting the enemy into our citadel.” The “*certain men crept in unawares*” of which he begins to write about in **Vs.4 CLAIMED** to know, believe, possess, and even declare this “*common salvation*”, but in reality they neither **KNEW IT, BELIEVED, nor DECLARED IT**. Matter of fact, Jude states plainly of them – “*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.*” The Apostle Peter dealt with the same sort of persons in **II Pet.2:1** – “*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*” This was what Paul warned the brethren at Ephesus about – **Acts 20:27-32**.

We’ll come back next time and begin looking at the **FALSE TEACHERS!**