

Perseverance

Jude 17–25 • June 28, 2015

To this point, Jude has abandoned his hope of writing an encouraging gospel letter to believers. Instead, he has reminded them of their need to fight to conform their lives to the revealed truth of God's Word. This is important because God must judge sin, and false believers who have inserted themselves into assemblies of believers will not escape. The Bible is full of examples of God's righteous judgment of sin. What then are true believers to do?

The Apostolic Warnings (vv. 17–19)

Not only had Enoch warned about ungodliness thousands of years earlier, Jesus' apostles were also sounding alarms about divisive, ungodly, unregenerate people (cf. 2 Pet 3:1–3; Phil 3:18–19). These will be unbelieving people, scoffers who reject the authority of God's Word. Their unbelief manifests itself in immorality and selfishness. These are not people in whom the indwelling Holy Spirit is producing the fruit of Christlikeness; these people love the world and everything in the world.

The Command to Persevere (vv. 20–21)

Unlike the false believers, Jude's readers must "keep themselves in the love of God" (v. 21; cf. John 15:12–14). This responsibility to center ourselves in God's love for us highlights human responsibility in sanctification. God loves and keeps us (v. 1); however, we are commanded to obey, "building ourselves up in the most holy faith" (v. 20). As we respond to God's revealed truth in faith and obedience, our lives demonstrate the character and actions that God loves. We also continue faithfully in prayer through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 8:26–27). This leads to waiting in faith and obedience for Jesus' return and our final salvation.

The Command to Evangelize (vv. 22–23)

However, not all professing believers persevere in faith or good works. Toward them, Jude commands a three-fold strategy depending on their need. For those who are struggling with doubts, we should mercifully hold out the hope of the gospel (v. 22). For those in danger of destruction, we should take aggressive action to show them the grace of Christ that can rescue them from God's wrath. For others, the danger of our own indwelling sin principle creates a cautiousness in us as we warn others to turn from their sin to faith in Jesus Christ (v. 23).

The Benediction (vv. 24–25)

Ultimately, it is only God who can and will preserve us and bring us into his presence in the blameless righteousness of Christ (v. 24). This indescribable joy will cause glory and praise to redound to Jesus Christ forever and ever (v. 25).

Jesus' church must constantly persevere in faith and pursue Christlikeness.

Questions to Think About:

How can we "build ourselves up in our most holy faith"? Will this be easy? In what ways do you need to "contend for the faith" in your life?

What would a false believer who is struggling with doubts look like? One in danger of destruction? One with a garment stained by the flesh? How should we respond?