

## **“A HANDBOOK FOR SURVIVAL”**

### ***“Building A Secure Foundation”***

**Scripture Reading – II Peter, 3:2-4; 8-14; 17-18**

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*I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles. First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation”.*

*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?*

*You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*

*Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.*

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*‘Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires”. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.’*

**Jude, 1:17-21, NIV**

**This series, ‘A HANDBOOK FOR SURVIVAL’, is based on THE LETTER OF JUDE.**

To protect from harm, to guard from attack, to repulse enemies – for centuries rugged defenders have built walls, launched missiles, and waged wars, expending materiel and human

resources in the battle to save nations and cities. With total commitment and courageous abandon, individuals have fought for their families. It is a rule of life that we fight for survival, defending with all our strength what is most precious to us, from every real or imagined attack.

**There are many people who live in opposition to God and his followers.**

They twist God’s truth, seeking to deceive and destroy the unwary, but God’s truth must go forth, carried and defended by those who have committed their lives to God’s Son. It is an important task, an awesome responsibility, and a profound privilege to have this commission.

**This was Jude’s message to Christians everywhere.**

Opposition would come and godless teachers would arise, but Christians should ‘**CONTEND FOR THE FAITH**’ by rejecting all falsehood and immorality, remembering God’s mighty acts of rescue and punishment, and the warnings of the apostles. His readers are encouraged to build up their own faith through prayer, keeping close to Christ, helping others, and hating sin. Finally, Jude concludes with a glorious benediction of praise to God.

*There are many false teachers waiting to destroy your Christ-centred life, the credibility of God’s Word, and the unity of the Body of Christ. THE LETTER OF JUDE calls Christians to stand firm in their faith and defend God’s truth at all costs, because nothing else is more valuable...*

## **“BUILDING A SECURE FOUNDATION”**

**Last time, we considered our response to those who question the Lord’s return.**

Throughout history, men have sniggered and scoffed at that which they did not understand. The Bible tells us that people laughed at Noah when he was building a huge boat in the middle of a desert, but they soon stopped laughing when the rain started to fall! People laughed at Jesus when he made amazing claims about his person and work. They scoffed as he was nailed to a cross, and they scoffed at those who claimed to have seen him resurrected. There are scoffers today when we claim that this same Jesus will return to claim us for his own.

*‘You must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation”.’*

**II Peter, 3:3-4, NIV**

**Jude warned us about those who would scoff at the Lord’s sudden return.**

As illustration, he recalled the life and teaching of Enoch, who, after his son was born, walked with God for 300 years, and spoke about the sure and just judgment that would come when the Lord returns with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones.

**Again we touch on the same subject, but in the context of BUILDING A SECURE FOUNDATION.**

*Kamp, aged 16, attended a party at a friend’s house. Whilst she was standing on a wooden deck behind the house with about twenty-five other teenagers, the decking collapsed and she was thrown to the ground suffering fractures of the tibia and fibula. Kamp’s tibia fracture*

resulted in the onset of temporary osteomyelitis. Kamp successfully sued the owner of the house and the tenant, whose child had invited the party goers. Because Kamp's medical bills amounted to \$68,000 and her injuries prevented her from taking a planned summer job, she accepted an out of court settlement with the tenant for \$78,000. Because the decking had rotten foundations, a jury returned a verdict against the owner to the tune of \$1.3 million.

In Dubai, an amazing development is occurring in the sea along the coastline. The Crown Prince is overseeing development of a group of man-made islands in the middle of the sea. Each island is made up entirely of sand, which has been dredged from the bottom of the sea before being put in exactly the right place using satellite positioning technology. When the sand is in place, it is hardened over a two year period before the islands are firm enough to be built upon. The development is costing billions upon billions of pounds, but what will happen when an earthquake hits the area – Dubai lies close to a geological fault line – to the hotels, offices, shops, and houses, all built upon a foundation of sand?

**Jude urges his readers to build – lay and live – upon a secure foundation...**

## 1. LAYING A SURE FOUNDATION

*'Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires". These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.'*

**Jude, 1:17-19, NIV**

**One of Satan's chief tactics is to attack the truth of the Word of God.**

In the Garden of Eden, the serpents' opening gambit when he attempted to lead Adam and Eve into disobedience and sin was "DID GOD REALLY SAY?" (see **Genesis, 3:1**). The reality was that God had not said what Satan was trying to debunk. In his wilderness temptations, Jesus was questioned by Satan as to whether or not he was the Son of God (see **Matthew, 4:3, 6**).

*Once we begin to question the Word of God, we are vulnerable to Satan's other attacks and tactics. Only the unchanging truth of God's Word can protect us from the lies of the devil.*

*'If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.'*

**Isaiah, 8:20b, NIV**

## THE APOSTLES SPOKE

**Whilst our Lord had many disciples, he selected only a few to be apostles.**

The word 'APOSTLE' means 'ONE WHO IS SENT WITH A COMMISSION'. In order to qualify for this role, a believer had to be a witness to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. When the Early Christian Church decided to replace the dead disciple Judas, two candidates were identified – Joseph and Matthias – although only one was chosen, both were suitably qualified (see **Acts, 1:21-22**). The apostles lived with Jesus Christ during his earthly

ministry, they learned from him, and were sent by him into the entire world to carry the Gospel of the good news of salvation.

**Wherever there is the authentic, the counterfeit will appear.**

This happened in the Christian Church. False apostles and teachers began to appear, and it was necessary to develop a system to protect the Church against false prophecies and forged letters. One of the main tests in the Early Christian Church was: 'IS THIS WHAT THE APOSTLES TAUGHT?'. When the Church collated the New Testament books, it was required that each book be written either by an apostle or by someone closely associated with an apostle, this was the test of truth.

**Every counterfeit Christian is a testimony to the worth and the validity of the real.**

People counterfeit money, credit cards, and passports but they do not counterfeit chewing gum wrappers. Why is that? Because chewing gum wrappers have no real value.

**Jude mentions the words that were spoken by the Apostles.**

Originally, of course, there were no New Testament letters, but over the years, inspired epistles were written by Paul, Peter, and John – we have these letters in our New Testament. We also have a record of some of their sermons in THE BOOK OF ACTS. The quotation Jude uses is not found in written form anywhere else in Scripture, so he may have been referring to a sermon that he heard – or a tradition of teaching that was well known at the time.

Remember that Jude wrote in order to urge his readers 'TO CONTEND FOR THE FAITH THAT WAS ONCE FOR ALL ENTRUSTED TO THE SAINTS' (see **Jude, 1:3**).

Whenever somebody offers you a 'new revelation', test it by what the Apostles wrote and by what Jesus Christ taught. You will soon discover that the 'new revelation' is a lie. If it is new then it is not true!

## WHAT THEY SAID

**They boldly declared that 'IN THE LAST TIMES THERE WILL BE SCOFFERS'.**

We have already noted that Jude parallels the warnings of II PETER, but they are not alone in their exhortations. When such warnings are given so frequently, we do well to take them seriously! Paul and John also warned about those who would come and deny the Word of God...

*'Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.'*

**I Timothy, 4:2, NIV**

*'Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.'*

**I John, 2:18, NIV**

**Such scoffers 'FOLLOW THEIR OWN UNGODLY DESIRES'.**

This explains why people deny God's truth – they do not want God to tell them how to live. They want to live in such a way that their sinful desires are satisfied, but the Word of God condemns such selfish, harmful, and hurtful behaviour. When a person has problems with the Bible it is usually a sign that they have some moral problem that the Scriptures condemn.

**The only sure way to know the truth of Scripture is by obeying it.**

Before Satan can substitute his own lies, he must get rid of the truth of God's Word. If he cannot argue it away, he will laugh it away, and he can usually find somebody to laugh with him.

**WHY THEY SAID IT**

**TO WARN AGAINST THOSE WHO DIVIDE THE CHURCH**

Their appeal is usually something like: *'We have a deeper knowledge of the Word of God that your Church does not have! We have a better understanding of prophecy, or we have a better understanding of the Christian life, than you do.'*

They offer a higher quality religion than that of the Apostles. The truth is always different.

***'Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!'***

**Acts, 20:28-31, NIV**

**TO WARN AGAINST THOSE WHO DECEIVE THE CHURCH**

Because such people **'FOLLOW MERE NATURAL INSTINCTS AND DO NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT'**, they are sensual people who must function on their soul power alone as opposed to the Spirit's power.

One of the tragedies today is that there is so much religious showmanship in the Church. Soul power magnifies the man, but Spirit power magnifies the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Spirit is ministering through the Word of God there is edification; but when the soul is manufacturing a ministry there is merely entertainment or intellectual education. Only when the Holy Spirit ministers to our spirits will we become more like Jesus.

In his book **"HOW TO RUIN YOUR LIFE"**, Ben Stein outlines thirty five ways to really mess up your life. If Stein's publication was around at the time of Jude, you would be able to use it to further identify the lifestyle of an apostate...

**DO NOT LEARN ANY SELF-DISCIPLINE**

*Do not make yourself work when you would rather play. Life is short. Do not bother to develop a sense of discipline in anything and you will be really happy and proud.*

**CONVINCE YOURSELF THAT YOU ARE THE CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE**

*You are the only one who matters in any given situation, so why listen to anyone else's troubles? Your problems are the ones that make the difference. So what, if, after a while, no one wants to talk to you? That is just proof of what dirt-bags they are!*

**NEVER ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANYTHING THAT GOES WRONG**

**CRITICISE EARLY AND OFTEN**

*There is something wrong with everything and everyone if you look closely enough. Make it your job to find it first and complain about it the loudest. The whole world needs to know that they are far from perfect.*

**ENVY EVERYTHING AND APPRECIATE NOTHING**

**HANG OUT WITH THE WRONG CROWD**

*Associate yourself with unlucky and unsuccessful people. Be close on a regular basis to those who have revolting habits.*

**MAKE THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU FEEL SMALL**

*Belittle them on a regular basis, and brag as much as you can about your family, your job, your finances, and the people you know.*

**KEEP SCORE**

*This is about letting the universe know that you're owed a better deal.*

**DO IT YOUR WAY**

*The rest of the world has to adjust to you. You are going to do your own thing. After all is said and done, you want to live to truly sing: 'I DID IT MY WAY'.*

***'Dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'***

**II Peter, 3:17-18a, NIV**

**2. LIVING ON A SURE FOUNDATION**

***'But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.'***

**Jude, 1:20-21, NIV**

**The Christian life must never stand still; if it does, it will go backward.**

A house left to itself falls apart. A beautiful garden left to itself soon becomes an overgrown wasteland. Whilst some in the Church are in the business of tearing down, every true Christian must be involved in building up – first, his own spiritual life, and then his Church family.

## **BUILD YOURSELVES UP IN YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH**

The foundation for our Christian life is our **'MOST HOLY FAITH'**, which is the same as **'THE FAITH THAT WAS ONCE FOR ALL ENTRUSTED TO THE SAINTS'** (see **Jude, 1:3**).

*There is a sense, of course, in which our faith in Jesus Christ is the basis for our growth, but even that faith depends on what God has revealed to us in his Word. Subjective faith always depends on objective revelation of truth.*

### **The Word of God is necessary for all spiritual growth.**

You cannot be a strong, fruitful Christian if you ignore your Bible. We must spend devotional time in the Word of God, seeking to know and understand something of the mind of God. We must study his Word regularly, in a disciplined way, so that we better understand what it teaches.

*The members of the Chinese Church have a saying: 'NO BIBLE...NO BREAKFAST'!*

## **PRAY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **The power for building the Christian life comes through prayer.**

To pray in the Holy Spirit means to pray according to his leading. The Word of God and prayer go together in spiritual growth. If all we do is read and study the Bible, we will have a great deal of light, but not much power. However, if we concentrate on prayer and ignore the Bible, we may be guilty of zeal without knowledge. We read the Word to grow in faith, and then we use that faith to ask God for what we need and what his Word tells us we may have.

Evangelist **Billy Sunday** gave his converts three rules for success in the Christian life: **'READ THE BIBLE – LET GOD TALK TO YOU. PRAY – TALK TO GOD. WITNESS – TALK ABOUT GOD'**.

*'Prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven; it is getting God's will done on earth.'*

***'This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.'***

**1 John, 5:14-15, NIV**

## **KEEP YOURSELVES IN GOD'S LOVE**

This building process in the Christian life involves the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and prayer. However, these things, as precious as they are, can become somewhat routine; so Jude added another factor: abiding in God's love. He did not write, **'KEEP YOURSELVES SAVED'** because he had already assured them that they were **'KEPT BY JESUS CHRIST'**.

***'Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love".'***

**John, 15:9, NIV**

### **To love God means much more than to enjoy a special kind of feeling.**

Of course, as we grow in grace, we do experience deeper fellowship with the Lord, and we do have times when he seems particularly very near. But it takes more than ecstatic feelings to make a successful Christian life. There must also be obedience and mutual concern. We grow in our love for God as we listen to his Word, obey it, and delight in doing what pleases him. That is how we keep ourselves in God's love.

***'If anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.'***

**1 John, 2:5-6, NIV**

## **WAIT FOR THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TO BRING ETERNAL LIFE**

*We build our Christian life on the foundation of faith and through the motivation of love, but we also need hope. The believer's eyes must be lifted towards heaven.*

***'Say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while you wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.'***

**Titus, 2:12-14, NIV**

### **The word translated 'WAITING' means 'EARNESTLY EXPECTING'.**

It describes an attitude of life that is motivated by the promise of our Lord's return. The apostates can only look for judgment, but God's people are looking for mercy. Not only is our salvation from sin the gift of God's mercy, but so also is the deliverance of his Church from this evil world. In his mercy, the Lord will come for us and take us to himself.

### **The three graces of 'FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE' enable us to grow in our spiritual walk.**

We are able to build on a solid foundation with materials that will not decay. Mere profession with the lips will not suffice. **'THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS'** makes it clear that to obey the will of God means to build on a foundation that cannot fail...

***'Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash".'***

**Matthew, 7:24-27, NIV**

**"THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION, IS JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD!"**