

Fri., Dec. 2, 2011

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Scripture

Jude 1-16

¹Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ:

²May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

³Beloved, while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share, I find it necessary to write and appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. ⁴For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

⁵Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great Day. ⁷Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

⁸Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones. ⁹But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" ¹⁰But these people slander whatever they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that, like irrational animals, they know by instinct. ¹¹Woe to them! For they go the way of Cain, and abandon themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain, and perish in Korah's rebellion. ¹²These are blemishes on your love-feasts, while they feast with you without fear, feeding themselves. They are waterless clouds carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, uprooted; ¹³wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever.

¹⁴It was also about these that E'noch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." ¹⁶These are grumblers and malcontents; they indulge their own lusts; they are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage.

Devotional

"... contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3).

Advent is not a season in which we dig deep into our hearts to find some reason to be hopeful and joyful. Rather it's a season in which we participate in our legacy of faith.

This is simply what we have always done in the Christian family—we've believed that Jesus Christ has come, is still at work in the world, and one day we'll see his advent again.

It doesn't really matter if I have a lot or a little belief in this some days. What matters is that we believe. On the days when I am overwhelmed with doubt I can lean on the Great Faith of the church. This is how we "contend for the faith." We choose to believe that we believe even when some of us are not so hopeful.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that Advent does not depend on me. Amen.