

The Letter of Jude (A.D. 68-70)

Verses 1-3

*“Although God’s people sometimes forget the importance of the truth, Satan never does. Ever since the fall, the father of lies (cf. John 8:44) has done everything in his power to destroy, hide, and twist the truth—constantly attempting to replace it with falsehood and deception. Ironically, his deadliest attacks do not come from those who openly reject the truth, but rather from those who profess to know and believe it, but lie. Satan’s most effective agents, **like spiritual terrorists**, secretly infiltrate the church where they pass themselves off as genuine shepherds and leaders. In reality, however, they are imposters and defectors, apostates who claim to know Christ, but in fact reject Him. They verbally affirm their knowledge of His Word, but their actions indicate that they are actually enemies of the truth.*

Jude’s concise letter is a forceful condemnation of the false teachers who were infiltrating the church in his day, by extension, all who were yet to come. In postmodern culture, in which truth is considered relative and tolerance is prized above all else, Jude’s eloquent plea for doctrinal purity is applicable. As Thomas R. Schreiner notes:

[Jude’s] message of judgment is especially relevant to people today, for our churches are prone to sentimentality, suffer from moral breakdown, and too often fail to pronounce a definitive word of judgment because of an inadequate definition of love. Jude’s letter reminds us that errant teaching and dissolute living have dire consequences...

In the end, failure to heed Jude’s message results in compromising the very ‘faith which was once for all handed down to the saints’ (v.3).” MacArthur

Author: Jude was Jesus Christ’s half-brother. He identifies himself as the brother of James who was head of the Jerusalem church. He, like James and perhaps the rest of his family, did not come to put his faith in Christ as his Lord and Savior until after His resurrection. Apparently, he was married and was in service to the Lord as an itinerant evangelist.

John 7:5 *For not even his brothers believed in him.*

Acts 1:14 *All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*

1 Cor. 9:5 *Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?*

δοῦλος doûlos *a slave, bondman, man of servile condition. metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests a servant, attendant Strong's Concordance*

1 Peter 2:16 *Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.*

Vs. 1 The letter Jude wrote to the churches has given believers throughout the church age prophetic insight and understanding into the spiritual forces of evil we the church are up against until the rapture. Therefore, it is vitally important that we know who we are in Christ. To lack any understanding of what that means for us is to open ourselves up to accepting Satan's lies concerning the truth of what our salvation means for us.

⇒ **The triad of who we are in Christ:**

1. We have been called. It is a high privilege and honor to be called by God Himself to become His forever child. The more that truth sinks in, the more it should move us to keep our relationship with Him vital and strong. To know that we've been called, i.e., chosen, should put in us a steadfast determination to keep the world's insidious demonic influence from entering our lives no matter how benign it might seem.

κλητός klētós, klay-tos'; *invited, i.e. appointed, or (specially), a saint:—called. Strong's*

"This word reflects the New Testament conviction that being a Christian is a product of God's gracious reaching out to bring helpless sinners into a relationship with himself. 'Call' does not mean, then, 'invite'—as if God were asking people to a party and they can either accept or decline. It means 'choose' or 'select,' and God's choosing'—because it is he, the sovereign Lord, who is doing it—is effective." Douglas J. Moo

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

2. We are loved by God the Father. Those who don't feel loved will often look for love at great compromise. Satan loves to love on people in ways that make them feel loved and accepted. His love is a false love which once accepted, can do great damage to believer's walk with the Lord. God's love is meant to protect us from loving the world's false love toward us, but in that is believing that we are truly loved by God with a perfect non-judgmental love despite how we might feel about ourselves.

1 John 3:1 *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

- 3. We are kept for Jesus Christ.** *“Being kept for Jesus Christ’ means that God throughout this life exercises his power on behalf of Christians to preserve them spiritually intact until the coming of Jesus Christ in glory. Believers have much to go through in this life: temptations, trials, and onslaughts from Satan and his minions. But God promises to watch over us at every moment, keeping us safe for Christ’s sake. Not of course that God’s preserving power means we can just relax and leave it all to him. Note how Jude beautifully comes back to this same idea at the end of the letter: ‘But keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life’ (v.21). God “keeps” us, but we must also ‘keep’ ourselves.” Douglas Moo*
- The fact that we are called, loved and kept by and for Jesus puts a hedge of protection around us that Satan can’t penetrate. To doubt the validity of any of those truths, opens the door in many ways to the influence of the demonic forces of evil we must guard against.

Vs. 2 Jude’s prayer for mercy, peace and love to be multiplied to us speaks of our need for those gifts of divine grace to uphold us in this fallen world.

*“The faith of Jude’s readers is threatened by dangerous infiltrators and so Jude prays that they may receive divine **mercy**, the pity that comes to aid, in total sufficiency. The reader’s fellowship with God through Jesus Christ is being disturbed; consequently they must have their divine **peace** reinforced, the peace that follows from an unsullied relationship with God. Supremely, the readers need God’s all-comprehending **love** (agapē) in overflowing measure. This will bind them to God and to one another in their Christian community.”*

Jude’s prayer is of permanent value, for ‘the called,’ that is, believers in every generation, constantly need divine mercy, peace and love. That prayer can be prayed in all confidence, since God delights to show mercy (Mic. 7:18). Christ himself is our peace (Eph. 2:14), and the Holy Spirit is the agent of love (Rom. 5:5).” Norman Hillyer

Micah 6:18 *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*

Eph. 2:14 *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,*

Rom. 5:5 *And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

Vs. 3 Jude exhorts believers to contend earnestly for the faith. To contend for the faith means to contend for truth. It's a responsibility given to all believers. It is what God expects us to do.

ἐπαγωνίζομαι epagōnízomai, ep-ag-o-nid'-zom-ahee; to struggle for:—earnestly contend for
“The powerful expression **contend earnestly** translates a present infinitive (epagōnízomai) and stresses the need to defend the truth continually and vigorously... It is a compound verb from which the English agonize is translated. From Jude’s day until now, true believers have always had to battle for the purity of the salvation gospel.” MacArthur

“In a practical sense, what does it mean to contend for the faith? What does contending for the faith look like? Fortunately, the book of Jude sets out several disciplines showing us how to contend for the faith:

1. *Build yourself up in the faith (Jude 1:20). We are to keep pressing ourselves to grow spiritually. A big part of spiritual development involves reading and studying God’s Word so that we know and understand it. “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). The inspired Word of God has the power to teach, train, rebuke, and correct us in righteousness so that as God’s servants we are wholly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).*

2. *Pray in the Holy Spirit (Jude 1:20). By praying under the direction of the Holy Spirit, we receive help in our human weakness to understand God’s truth and not be deceived by false teachers (Romans 8:26).*

[Rom. 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.]

3. *Keep yourself in God’s love (Jude 1:21). Staying in God’s love means living by faith and obedience to God. Jesus told us, “If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love” (John 15:10). We obey God because He has captivated our hearts and won our allegiance (Romans 6:17). The ultimate expression of our obedience to God is shown through our loving others (1 John 3:11–24; 1 Peter 1:22).*

4. *Wait with hope (Jude 1:21). To contend for the faith, we must keep the fire of hope alive in our hearts. When Jude says to wait “expectantly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life,” he is referring to living every moment of life with the confident expectation that Jesus Christ may return at any moment (Titus 2:13). gotquestions.org*