

JUDE

FIGHTING FOR YOUR FAITH FROM A PLACE OF JOY

Good morning Church!

Today we're delving into a book of the bible that doesn't often get a lot of coverage. According to BibleGateway.com this short little letter is the 8th least read book in the entire Bible! That's a shame because Jude comes out swinging like Rocky Balboa from the get go and encourages every Christian to, "**contend for the faith.**"

It's short, sweet and to-the-point style of writing is mentioned at the get-go when Jude tells us he meant to write a longer letter on salvation, but felt the issues facing the global Church were too urgent for a longform message, so he decided to fire off what amounts to a juicy, punchy tweet to drive home several key points, which we're going to dig into today.

RINGWALK

Jude 1-2 NASB

1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

Alright, pretty easy intro. In fact, it doesn't sound too different from the openings of Paul's many letters. But a couple things we should take note of:

- 1. Jude is the youngest of Jesus' half-brothers, none of whom believed in Him until after His resurrection.*
- 2. Jude is likely writing this 20-50 years after The Resurrection, and he calls himself Jesus' "bondservant."*
- 3. Jude is not writing this letter to a specific church, most likely sending it to Jewish Christians in the Mediterranean region.*

Jude starts off this letter naming his target audience: You and me. And what does he call us?

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

He establishes our **identity** as first and most important *before* making supplication for us, saying:

2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

OPENING JABS

Jude 3-4 NASB

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Jude is wasting no time in encouraging believers everywhere to “**contend for the faith**”.

Why?

Because wolves have stepped into the church and are wreaking havoc. So in response, Jude is telling Christians to “glove up”.

How?

Jude tells us in 17, but let's take a look at what leads up to it.

Jude states that these opponents are “ungodly persons” who twist grace into a license to sin.

Some teachers refer to this as “hyper grace” or “greasy grace”, but while clever monikers, I think these labels are misleading. Grace is the very thing that saves

us, because Jesus HIMSELF is Mr. Grace. The problem is not grace, nor a poor understanding of “grace”, the problem is these false teachers have taken the freedom of the Gospel and *intentionally* twisted and perverted it into something that *excuses* and even *approves* of their sin.

Jude comes out swinging, saying these people are:

- Sneaks “*Crept in unnoticed*”
- Cursed, “*marked out for condemnation*”
- Evil, “*Ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness*”
- Unbelievers, “*deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*”

He’s establishing early on in this letter that these people aren’t on our side, but more than that he’s about to establish the ancient roots of these antagonists.

INTO THE FRAY

Jude 5-16 NASB

5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in the gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Here Jude gives these guys a 3-part combo through three different groups he is comparing these infiltrators to:

- The rebellious, stubbornly ungodly Israelites who refused to believe God despite witnessing some of His greatest demonstrations of His power.
- The angels who rebelled against God and committed, according to many theologians, the forbidden act of sleeping with human women.
- Sodom and Gomorrah, who rebelled against God's created order by going "**after strange flesh**" and giving full vent to their sexual perversions.

There are some who claim to be pastors and religious leaders who actually take this passage out of context and try to justify sexual sin, including homosexuality by pointing out the word translated as "**Strange Flesh**" is the Greek word *Hetero*, which means "Strange" or "Other" and that God meant we shouldn't traffic people or sleep with angels...because...obviously.

But that's not the way it reads, nor is it what Jude meant.

He specifically used *Hetero* in the same fashion Paul does in Romans when he says, **“for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another.”**

Romans 1:26-27 NASB

In both cases, *Hetero* is used to refer to someone engaging in practices that are “Strange” and “Other” *from* the health of God’s original design.

All three of these examples come with judgment tagged onto the end.

Why?

Because God demands sin and its corrosive corruption must perish, and these guys aren’t walking away from the bonfire anytime soon, they would rather perish with it, just like the three groups he lists.

Jude finishes this combo with another devastating barrage,

Jude 8-16 NASB

8 Yet in the same way, these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed! 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Jude begins this section pointing out that these prowlers don't even live in reality, referenced by the statement “**also by dreaming**”. Jude references here a Jewish book at the time (a pseudepigrapha: *not written by the author*) called the Testament of Moses, in which Michael and the devil are arguing about Moses' corpse. His goal in referencing this is to show how even righteous angels, who are stronger, will not step out of bounds but will instead trust God. Jude then points out that the very things these cursed men do and know by instinct (sin/godlessness) are the very things that will bring destruction on themselves.

Just when you thought it couldn't get any spicier, here is another 1-2-3 Combo from Jude, as he now is comparing these false teachers to three prominent villains in biblical history who became symbols of corporate corruption:

- Cain, who achieved his own end through murder and violence.
- Balaam, who, in his greed, sought to curse Israel but couldn't, and instead lured the Israelites into judgment by committing sexual immorality.
- Korah, who instigated a rebellion against God's messengers, namely Moses, Aaron and Miriam and caused not only himself but his family and followers to be killed.

But Jude's not finished yet. He's about to go pound-for-pound with several other scathing labels for these guys. Jude says they are:

- **“*Hidden reefs*” that shipwreck others and create factions.**
 - **“I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.”** 1 Corinthians 11:17-18 NASB
- **Fearlessly self-centered at the Church “Love Feasts”.**
 - **“It is not the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk.”** 1 Corinthians 11:20b-21 NASB
 - *The Aramaic here can be translated as, “Shepherds who only care for themselves” or “they submit their souls to no one”*
 - **“Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up,**

the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force you have dominated them.” Ezekiel 34:2b-4
NASB

- **Clouds without water.**

- **“Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.”** Proverbs 25:14 NASB

- **Autumn trees without fruit.**

- **“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit and every bad tree bears bad fruit.”** Matthew 7:15-17 NASB

- **Doubly Dead/ Twice Dead**

- **Wild Waves Casting Up Their Own Shame**

- **“But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud. ‘There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked.’”** Isaiah 57:20-21 NASB

He puts these selfish shepherds on notice that, **“blackest darkness has been reserved for them.”**

At this point, it looks like these false brothers are one the ropes, but Jude isn’t finished yet. He goes on to say:

Jude 14-19 NASB

14 It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” 16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. 17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our lord Jesus Christ, 18 that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” 19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit

Holy smokes. And you thought the first part was spicy? Jude levels these guys by calling them out for every selfish, destructive and perverted action they’ve undermined the church with.

So now, after Jude has gone toe-to-toe and pummeled these serpents via Scripture, surely he’s going to tell us to go-a-huntin’ and physically root these guys out, right? Go lay some hands on them, aggressively?

Actually, the way Jude is saying to “glove up” might surprise you.

THE KNOCKOUT

The TKO in this case is dealt, not from Jude, but rather from the Spirit of God. The *coup de grace* turns out to be living the Gospel! Check this out:

Jude 20-25 NASB

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; 23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Jude is saying, “Hey guys, I need you all to contend for the faith we share in common! Here’s what I need you to do:”

1. Build up your inner life in faith
2. Pray in the Spirit
3. Remain in God’s Love
4. Wait on God

5. Have compassionate mercy on those who are struggling with doubt
6. Preach the Gospel to the lost and unbelieving
7. Hate even the easiest form of compromise

Jude reassures us that God is going to, “**keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of glory blameless with great joy**”

He then ends this epic rumble with worship, praising and adoring Jesus.

to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

It's safe to say that there are a lot of compromises being made in the western church. We're giving a lot of ground in places we shouldn't all in the name of, “being loving.” But love without truth is hypocrisy.

Today, Jude has called us to contend for the faith.

Not with fists, but with trust and perseverance.