

ABIDE: A BIBLE READING CHALLENGE

JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

HOW TO FIGHT

JUDE

This is the book that came from a changed mind. John MacArthur suggests that an appropriate title for this book could be “The Acts of the Apostates” because of the content found in this book. In the first couple of verses, we see that Jude had intended to write on the subject of salvation, but said that God changed his mind. The third verse of Jude says, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Vs. 3)

Sometimes God will do that to you. You’ll set out to do one thing, and you’ll end up doing something completely different. In this case, the subject changed from salvation in the faith, to fighting for the faith.

But before we run too far down this path, let’s give a little attention to this author. It appears that this is none other than one of the four half-brothers of Jesus mentioned in the New Testament (Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3). Jude calls himself the brother of James who was another half-brother of Jesus. What is significant about this is that Jude never appeals to this fact when giving his instruction. Jude never says, “You need to listen to me... I’m the half-brother of Jesus!” He simply introduces himself as the servant of Jesus. The more you know Jesus, the more you’ll respond in humility. Now, back to the letter!

In careful study of this little book, you start to see some striking similarities between this letter, and Peter’s second letter. Not only this, but we see the same similarities in the little letters of John. What are the similarities? The teachings about spotting Biblical error and defending the faith. God isn’t afraid to repeat Himself. If you didn’t catch the seriousness of a subject the first time, God will repeat Himself so that we can be safe from what would otherwise do us great harm.

The great harm in this case were attacks made against what Jude simply called, ‘the faith’. Jude affirmed that in ‘the faith’, there is only one origin of the World, there is only one entrance of sin and death in the human race, there is only one diagnosis of man’s problem, there is only one standard of morality, only one condition for judgment, only one design for the family, only one way to live, only one way of salvation, and there is only One Savior who binds it all together. This is the faith that was ‘once delivered to the saints.’

So in a small, but power-packed letter, Jude instructs us to fight for our faith. But he doesn’t leave us there— Jude also shows us how to fight for the faith.

How to Think About Jude

When we're fighting against true and harmful error, Jude tells us that we shouldn't pull any punches; because God doesn't.

How God Dealt with Error in the Past (Vs. 4-7)— It seemed particularly disturbing to Jude that those who were enemies of the church of Christ started to become infiltrators of the church of Christ. They were making their way into congregations, after that, they were making their way into influence, and then they were making into places of church leadership. Look at Verse 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." But Jude reminds us that He sees it all and that He judges it all. Verse 5, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."

God Judged Egypt (Verse 5): Those in Egypt who pursued God's people and decided to fight against God were ultimately destroyed.

God Judged the Angels (Verse 6): The Bible gives us little hints of information about a great rebellion that happened in eternity past. Lucifer, the son of the morning, led a great angelic rebellion in heaven against God, convincing a large number of angelic beings to join his little quest. However, God has the last word, and the reward they get for this attempted assault on God's glory results in nothing but everlasting chains and darkness.

God Judged Sodom and Gomorrah (Verse 7): These were people who perverted God's gift of sex. Sex is not ours to command or control, and those who tried to change the meaning of that gift through immorality were eventually destroyed.

How God's People Detect Error Now (Verses 8-13)— In these verses Jude shows the characteristics of those who set themselves against God, and describes the kind of theological life-style they kept.

They Slander the Heavenly (Verses 8-10): A false teacher has no idea about what to do with angelic creatures, and what is tragic is that we oftentimes don't respect what we don't understand. We don't know how to treat it. This is a mistake when it comes to angelic beings. A failure to recognize the power of the heavenly realm is to place ourselves in great spiritual danger. Just to give us a taste of how arrogant it is to not respect the supernatural power of the angelic principalities, Jude here, tells us a story about the archangel, Michael and the prince of darkness, Lucifer disputing over the body of Moses after he died. Michael, this mighty, ruling-class angel, treated Lucifer with respect until God had to step in and handle the situation.

They Reject Authority (Verses 11): Jude mentions a couple of incidents to show us how to identify a false teacher— they hate authority. He mentions Balaam, and he mentions Cain, as individuals who were directly given instruction, and who deliberately disobeyed. You should go back and read these accounts and see how well it ended up for them.

They Have No Substance (Verses 12-13): It would make sense that they have no substance. Whenever you don't respect the powerful, and whenever you shirk off the absolute, there is no authority behind any of your claims (they have rejected everything that matters). Therefore, false teachers can be detected by the fact that their teachings are constantly changing.

How God Will Deal with Error in the Future (Verses 14-16)— This is a prophetic announcement that Jude gives to shake people back to the reality that the Lord is coming to pronounce judgment on every form of rebellion.

How God's People Should Deal with Error Now (Verses 17-25)— Before Jude closes with a little glory statement in the last few verses, he gives some practical advice on how to deal with error. The recipe is simple: Build yourself up in the faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, keep yourself in the love of God, and look forward to the mercy of Jesus. There is not a force in existence, or a teaching so deceptive that can stand against this recipe to save us from error.

What to Look for in Jude

Word Pictures— This small letter is absolutely pregnant with word pictures. We don't have time to go through them all, nor to explain them, but let's mention a few just to give you an idea of Jude's style of communication.

Raging waves of the seas, foaming out their own shame

Wandering Stars

Clouds without water

spots in your feast of charity

Water carried about of winds

Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots

Gone the way of Cain

Brute Beasts

What to Gain from Jude—

Jude gives an absolute battle cry against apostasy, and as he carries this message, there are two primary applications you can gain from this letter.

As Long As Christ Tarries, There Will Always Be A Battle— The closer we get to the coming of the Lord, apostasy will continue to get worse and worse. Just think for a moment about how we're able to communicate. With a few clicks, I can send this document anywhere around the world. It is a wonderful thought. I can get truth to people within a matter of seconds! But on the other side, it's just as easy to spread error. Error comes through every electronic means imaginable, and the ease of mass production means that error can be relentlessly pervasive.

The fact is there is a battle out there, and there will always be a battle for truth until Jesus comes and sets everything right. Until Christ returns those given to apostasy will make it a point to spread a false gospel, pervert a pure truth, promote a false morality, and expect complete compliance for all of it. It's a battle, and apostates will not take prisoners.

As Long As Christ Tarries, We Should Always be Ready to Fight— Who will stand against this army of apostasy? God's people are the agents that keep this kind of darkness causing the world to go completely black. But warfare always takes a readiness. Verse 17, says, "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:" Remember! Be prepared! Jesus didn't pull one over on us and tell us that the world would be just fine and that we shouldn't worry about it. He told us that it was going to get worse. Jesus told us that we would be in the fight of our lives. Jesus told us that living out our faith would come with challenges. But He told us, as Jude reminds us here, it is Jesus who will see us through to the end.



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