

## **Jude: Fight for the Faith**

### **By David Feddes**

The overall theme of Jude is to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints, or fight for the faith. That's the overall theme of this great book.

Jude is what is called a general epistle, or sometimes also called one of the Catholic epistles. That doesn't mean what today is labeled the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic here means universal epistles or letters of the New Testament that were written by people not named Paul. These include the Epistle of James, the first and second letters of Peter, the first, second, and third letters of John, and then the letter of Jude.

### **Who was Jude?**

He introduces himself by saying, "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James." Jude was a son of Mary and Joseph, and being their son made him the half-brother of Jesus and a brother of James, Joseph, Simon, and their sisters. Although Jude was the brother of James and half-brother of Jesus, he doesn't describe himself as brother of Jesus, only as servant of Jesus.

When James and his brothers and sisters were growing up with their oldest half-brother Jesus, they weren't overly impressed by him. Neither were the people in town who grew up with them or who saw Jesus grow up. When they heard that Jesus was allegedly teaching great things and doing mighty things, they said, "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?" (Matthew 13:55). Judas is also Judah or Jude; all three names are the same. You can understand why we have a book named Jude rather than Judas, because Judas is a name associated with betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ. That was a different Judas, but Jude was Judas, the half-brother of Jesus. The people also said, "Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at him (Matthew 13:56-57).

If you were one of Jesus' brothers growing up with him, people thought Jesus was just one more of the bros, the carpenter's kid, and not very impressive. It wasn't just the townspeople who weren't impressed. At one point, when Jesus began his ministry, his family said, "He is out of his mind" (Mark 3:21). Even his own brothers did not believe in him (John 7:5).

Maybe that should free us from the notion that if only we had been there, if only we had seen Jesus firsthand, it would have been easier to believe. Evidently, you could be his half-brother and not believe in him. His brothers and sisters didn't believe in him while they were growing up with him, or even when he was doing his mighty works of ministry. Only after the risen Lord appeared to James and to others in the family did they put their faith in him (1 Corinthians 15:7).

Then Jude no longer referred to him as "my older brother that I don't really believe in." Instead, he called himself "a servant of Jesus Christ." That should remind us how dangerous it is to be familiar with Jesus. A lot of you didn't grow up in the same place as Jesus or call him your half-brother, but ever since you were old enough to talk, you knew the name Jesus. You were familiar with him. Sometimes familiarity breeds contempt. Jesus can become part of the furniture of

growing up: you learn not to wipe your nose, you learn to believe in Jesus, you learn to be polite, you learn a bunch of stuff from your parents that, when you grow up and think you know better, you dismiss. Jesus can seem like just part of that package you outgrew.

It can be a great blessing to grow up with Jesus, but it can also be dangerous to have that kind of familiarity, where you think, “I know all about him. There’s nothing really amazing or remarkable about him.” Jude grew up that way, but he came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Who is Jesus?**

Who is Jesus now in Jude’s eyes? Not just that familiar older brother he once thought was crazy and didn’t believe in. Now he sees Jesus as the Messiah, the Lord God, the Savior. He introduces himself as “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ.” That makes Jesus his master. He uses the word “Christ,” which means Messiah. It’s the Greek word for the Hebrew “Messiah.” So Jesus is the Christ, and he is “our only sovereign and Lord” (v. 4).

No longer is Jesus the unbelieved-in older brother. He is Messiah, Lord, and Savior. Near the end of the letter, Jude speaks of “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life” (Jude 21). The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is what carries you to eternal life. Jude has a very different view of Jesus now than he did growing up in the same household.

So that’s who Jude is, and that’s who Jesus is: the Lord, the Savior, the God who brings you to eternal life by his mercy. Let’s listen now to what Jude wrote.

## **Jude (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,  
To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

<sup>3</sup> Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.<sup>4</sup> For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

<sup>5</sup> Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. <sup>6</sup> And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. <sup>7</sup> In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

<sup>8</sup> In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. <sup>9</sup> But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord

rebuke you!”<sup>10</sup> Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them.

<sup>11</sup> Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion.

<sup>12</sup> These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. <sup>13</sup> They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

<sup>14</sup> Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones <sup>15</sup> to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” <sup>16</sup> These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

<sup>17</sup> But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. <sup>18</sup> They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” <sup>19</sup> These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. <sup>17</sup> But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. <sup>18</sup> They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” <sup>19</sup> These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

<sup>20</sup> But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

<sup>22</sup> Be merciful to those who doubt; <sup>23</sup> snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. <sup>24</sup> To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—<sup>25</sup> to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen!

## **Jude**

- Fight for the Faith
- Fear Eternal Fire
- Keep Being Kept

Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible and one of the hardest hitting. I want to emphasize three main themes in three different messages in this series, and focus on three strands that run throughout the book. The first is to fight for the faith and against those who are challenging or undermining the faith. The second is, fear the eternal fire, the punishment that awaits those who reject the truth and all who follow them. Finally, keep being kept. That may sound strange, but

the epistle begins by saying you are called and kept by Jesus Christ, and then at the end it says he is able to keep you from falling. Between these bookends at the beginning and end about God keeping you, but you also need to keep on: "build yourself up in your most holy faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, to keep yourselves in God's love." There is something you need to keep on doing as God keeps on keeping you.

So those are the three strands that run through Jude that we're going to look at in three different messages: first, fight for the faith; second, fear eternal fire; and third, keep being kept.

## **Fight for the Faith**

- Expect evil attacks
- Expound gospel truth
- Expose enemy agents

## **Expect evil attacks**

To fight for the faith, the first thing is expect evil attacks. Don't be shocked. Don't say, "Oh, I never saw that one coming. I can't imagine there would be false teaching or wicked people leading others astray by their ideas and by their example." Expect it, because these are "men whose condemnation was written about long ago," Jude says at the beginning of the letter. Near the end he says, "Now remember what the apostles told you. This was coming." So don't be caught by surprise. Expect attacks, evil, and errors to come against you.

We live in the time between Jesus' first coming and his second coming, a time of rapid transition in history. Many of the churches of Europe have grown mostly empty, and we see a lot of the same thing going on in the churches of the United States. Church involvement and belief in Christian orthodoxy have slid very rapidly. Much of that began when different ideas about the Bible and its authority, different ideas about the deity of Jesus Christ, different ideas about the need for Jesus' blood to wash away our sins, different ideas about the reality of his resurrection, and different ideas about the truth of his miracles were introduced in the mid-to-late 1800s in churches, seminaries, and institutions of education.

As those things were taught by people alleged to be leaders in the church, there was a huge slide: first in doctrinal belief, then in church attendance, and then in what is considered moral or immoral behavior. This is the time we're living in. It is not a time to panic. It is not a time to say, "Oh no, now the church is lost." Christ will build his church. The only question is whether you're going to be part of it or whether you're going to follow the liars and evildoers who have sneaked into the church and done their thing. It's not like we weren't warned.

But you will get what you want. That is one of the great dangers of our own time. We could say, "Oh, these teachers are bad." But in another place the Bible says they will deliver what itching ears want to hear (2 Timothy 4:3). You wanted it, you got it. You can find what you want. If you want people to pander to you and tell you exactly what you want to hear, they're out there. They've always got "improvements" on the gospel to make it easier to believe, but no longer

worth believing. They've always got "improvements" on Christian morality to make it easier to live by, except it's not worth living by anymore.

Expect such things, and especially in the time in which we now live, expect them. Instead of panicking and going into "woe is me" mode, realize it is a great opportunity to live in such a time. Christ is calling you to stand clear and firm, to expect evil attacks, and not give in to them.

### **Expound gospel truth**

We must believe and proclaim and expound "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). The word "faith" can be used in different ways. Sometimes faith refers to trusting, counting on Jesus, receiving Christ as your Savior. But sometimes faith refers to "the faith." There it's not so much our act of trusting, but what is proclaimed in the gospel, the facts of the faith.

The faith has a definite content. It's been delivered to the saints once for all. It doesn't get improved on in later times. You don't improve on the faith as delivered in the New Testament. Anybody who claims to be improving or tweaking it is harming and detracting from it.

So we need to expound gospel truth. Those of us who hold to the gospel of Jesus Christ must hold it firmly. The apostle Paul said, "Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Paul then goes on to expound the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and the life of the world to come. But he says this is the gospel that I preached, and you take your stand on it unless you believed in vain.

So there is *the* faith, the truth of the gospel delivered to the saints: the truth of God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; the truth of Jesus Christ and the way of salvation in him; the truth of our need for salvation because of our sin; the truth of the Holy Spirit's work to create in us trust and to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the essence of gospel truth, delivered once for all to the saints and testified to in the Scriptures.

If you're going to fight for the faith, you need to expect evil attacks, and you need to expound gospel truth, to hold firmly to the faith and nothing else, and proclaim it boldly. You also need to know who the villains are and what they're like.

### **Expose enemy agents**

Jude spends a considerable amount of time exposing enemy agents. He doesn't say much about the gospel truth itself. He says, "I wanted to write to you about the salvation we share" (Jude 3), and he assumes they already know the basics of the faith because it's been delivered to them. So now he spends most of his time exposing enemy agents as he urges them to fight for the faith.

I want to highlight eight things Jude says about these enemy agents: they are sneaky, godless, immoral, rebellious, animalistic, greedy, divisive, and ruinous.

## **Sneaky**

First, they're sneaky. "Certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you" (Jude 4). Our Lord Jesus said, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves" (Matthew 7:15). They appear to be among the sheep, but they are really wolves sharpening their teeth to devour the sheep. The apostle Paul wrote of people who are "false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). They come claiming to be like apostles, but they're fake apostles, false apostles, deceitful workmen.

When I read that phrase "deceitful workmen," an image came to mind. I had seen a show where some people were called upon to renovate the U.S. Capitol building. As they did their work, they identified weak spots in the structure and then passed along to terrorists where charges should be planted to blow it up and destroy Congress. Those were deceitful workmen. You thought they were strengthening the building, but they were planting explosives. That's the picture of deceitful workmen: they act like they're building the church, but they're blowing it apart.

Satan masquerades as an angel of light. Muhammad comes along and says, "An angel appeared to me. He was the angel Gabriel, and he gave me this book straight from heaven, called the Quran. If you read it, you'll find Jesus is not the Son of God. You don't need to be saved by his death, because he didn't even really die. You just need a law from Allah, and if you keep it, you'll be saved." It was an angel, allegedly, who gave Muhammad that revelation. He said earlier biblical writings were fine but errors had slipped in; the Quran would correct those errors and add more truths and be the final revelation.

In the 1800s, a man named Joseph Smith said he was visited by the angel Moroni. Moroni gave him something called the Book of Mormon. According to this "angel," the faith was not once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3). The New Testament was nice, but not enough. Joseph Smith said: "The New Testament is fine, but it doesn't mean quite what people have been saying all along. If you read the Book of Mormon and listen to my teachings and to the Mormon religion, then for the first time you'll really understand the gospel and who Jesus Christ is." Both Muhammad and Joseph Smith claimed new revelation from angels, but brought a message that "denied Jesus Christ, our only sovereign and Lord" (Jude 1:4).

These were not brand-new religions. Islam claims to be the true continuation and successor of Judaism and Christianity. Joseph Smith claimed to be recovering the true church of Jesus—"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"—restoring what the original followers of Jesus supposedly had. But in both cases, the faith once for all delivered to the saints was not enough. A new book had to be given.

It happens in other forms too. I mentioned before the seminaries and pastors who offered new insights from the experts. They said, “We now know in this modern age that miracles don’t happen.” Rudolf Bultmann, one of the foremost Bible scholars in Germany, said, “In the age of the wireless, in the age of the radio, we can no longer believe in miracles.” I’ve tried to follow that logic: radios, therefore no miracles—but I just can’t make that syllogism work. Still, there was a notion that if you live in a technological age, God doesn’t do amazing things anymore.

So you had all these people, with lofty degrees, called “Reverend,” holding important positions, but not teaching the faith once for all entrusted to the saints. They’re sneaky.

## **Godless**

Jude says such people are godless men who deny Jesus Christ our only sovereign and Lord (1:4). He compares them to the Israelites who didn’t believe in God’s power (1:5). He quotes Enoch’s prophecy about people who do ungodly things in ungodly ways and have ungodly thoughts (1:15). The word “ungodly” is repeated. He says that “do not have the Spirit” (1:19).

Godlessness can mean atheism, not believing that God exists at all. In some churches in Europe and America, you’re considered a troublemaker if you think a preacher should actually believe God exists. I’m not joking. There are atheists who say, “Why can’t I be a pastor just because I don’t believe in God? I believe in left-wing politics—that’s even better.” They literally don’t believe in God, but they believe in their own brand of do-gooderism, and they think a church should exist for like-minded people.

You can also have church leaders who don’t believe in miracles. That’s godless, because the reason you don’t believe in miracles is that you don’t believe in someone great whose power goes beyond what you can observe in the natural world. You don’t believe in prophecies about the future because you don’t believe in the God who knows the end from the beginning and directs history according to his will. You may believe in some little “godlet,” or you may say that faith in God is the existential decision you make to give your life meaning. But that isn’t God.

God does as he wills with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth (Daniel 4:35). When you believe in the real God, you believe miracles can happen. You believe he intervenes in history. You believe in the resurrection of the dead. You believe the Bible speaks from him, that he inspired it, and that it is given to us as his final revelation.

Once again, it’s being godless to say the Bible is just a human document to be analyzed like any other, keeping the parts we like and discarding the rest. That denies God as the source of the Scriptures. So there are many forms of godlessness among false teachers, and we need to be aware of each of them.

## **Immoral**

Along with sneakiness and godlessness, there’s also the tendency to promote and practice immorality. What does Jude say about them? “They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality” (Jude 4). The particular teaching he was dealing with

came from people who highlighted how nice God is. Certainly the Bible declares the grace of God, the forgiveness of God, the mercy of God, the kindness of God. But when that is twisted to mean, “Now we do whatever we please, because grace encourages us to be ourselves and do whatever we feel like,” then grace has been changed into a license for immorality.

James says something similar in his letter: “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead” (James 2:14, 26). Faith that doesn’t change you isn’t real faith. That’s the upshot. So people who change the grace of God into a license to do whatever they want are false teachers. Jude speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah giving themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion (Jude 7).

I remember reading a bunch of essays by C. S. Lewis. One of them was called *Rejoinder to Dr. Pittenger*. You say, “Who was Dr. Pittenger?” Exactly. But anyway, Dr. Pittenger didn’t like Lewis’s book *Miracles* because he didn’t like supernatural things. A few years after Lewis died, Norman Pittenger came out as a homosexual. He didn’t believe in the miraculous, but beneath that was his desire not just to get rid of miracles, but to make space for immorality.

People who love sexual immorality and perversion find the living God inconvenient, and they find the Scriptures very inconvenient. In an age soaked in pornography, in people shacking up, in people divorcing whenever they please so they can have a different mate, it sells well to change Christian morality. Jude says, “These dreamers pollute their own bodies” (Jude 8).

Another leading liberal scholar, Paul Tillich, lived a very promiscuous life and promoted liberal doctrine that no longer emphasized salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ, or his resurrection, or living by Christian morality. And lately there have been reliable reports about some who have risen high in the Vatican while living in utter licentiousness. Behind certain kinds of teaching and church structures are some very evil, perverted, corrupt people.

We shouldn’t spend all our time blasting others, but we do need to spend some time on it, because God does, and Jude does. We need to realize there are people like that. When they write their books, they may sound very learned. But if you look at their lifestyles, they’re disgusting.

Be aware that this can be a factor in how false teachers behave and the kind of lifestyle they lead others into. When you analyze what happened to churches in Europe and Britain, you’ll find that the shift in sexual morality went hand in glove with the great falling away of church attendance and belief in Christian orthodoxy. These things are not separate. As I said before, people get what they want. If they want to behave a certain way, then they need to believe a certain way, and they will change their beliefs to suit their behavior.

## **Rebellious**

They are rebellious. Jude compares them to the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home (1:6). He says they not only pollute their own bodies, but they also reject authority and slander celestial beings. They don’t take angels seriously as mighty and powerful beings.



By contrast, Jude says even the archangel Michael, the mightiest and most splendid of all angels, when he was disputing with the devil over the body of Moses, “did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (1:9). Even the greatest of angels appeals to the Lord when dealing with another mighty angelic power.

But you’ve got people today talking about God as though he were unimportant, just a little idea in a book, and talking about angels as though they were fantasy from a benighted age. They have no clue what they’re talking about. They know nothing of the splendor, might, and power of the angels. They know nothing of the terror, evil plots, and immense power of Satan and the fallen angels. They know nothing of the supernatural world.

And they try to pretend they themselves are the big shots of the universe. That’s what the fallen angels wanted: to be number one instead of God. Behind all the false teaching is that same desire: to be number one. They “reject authority.” They have an authority problem. For example, Korah said, “Aren’t I just as good as Moses and Aaron? Why should they be leaders and not me?” (Numbers 16)

There will be scoffers. They’re going to think they know better than the faith. Jude is not very nice about them. But remember, it’s not just Jude talking. It is the voice of God speaking through Jude, the voice of the Holy Spirit about these rebellious, polluting, authority-rejecting scoffers. He says you’ve got to ignore them and not listen to them.

## **Dreamers**

Jude speaks of “these dreamers,” and the Bible elsewhere also warns against dreamers. This notion of sneaky, godless, immoral, rebellious dreamers runs throughout the Bible. Isaiah 56 speaks of dreamers: “Israel’s watchmen are blind, they all lack knowledge; they are all mute dogs, they cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep” (Isaiah 56:10). Israel’s leaders, prophets, and politicians were drinkers and fools. They said, “Tomorrow will be like today, or even far better” (Isaiah 56:12). They were drunkards and dreamers because they would rather sleep than lead as God called them to lead. That’s why Isaiah calls them dreamers.

But there’s another meaning to being a dreamer as well. Dreams sometimes brought revelation from God, but often they didn’t. God says, “I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’ Let the prophet who has a dream recount the dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully... I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” declares the Lord. “They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them” (Jeremiah 23:25, 28, 32).

Sometimes even today, books sell better if the author claims a firsthand revelation. If you write a book about the future and explain what the Bible says God has prepared for those who love him, a few people might buy it. But if you say, “I went to heaven and came back, and here’s what it was like”—a near-death experience—or in one notorious case, even write about your kid’s supposed near-death experience (and make it up if you have to), that book will sell like hotcakes. In our time, claims about personal experience trump the Word of God.

If you claim that Jesus spoke to you directly, your meditation book will sell like crazy. Just write as though Jesus himself is speaking in the first person, and people will buy your book. But if you simply write a book of meditations on what Jesus says in the Bible, who wants that?

That's the way of the dreamers: they talk about their dreams. But if you've got the written Word of God, then you tell people what God says. I can't control who listens, but I can control what I say. And if I start telling you something I dreamed during my nap or a hangover, don't listen. Listen to what I say when I've studied the Word of God, meditated on it, and then get up in the pulpit to say what God tells me to say. We need to hear the Word of God, not the dreamers.

So you have these sneaky, godless, immoral, rebellious dreamers. And Jude goes on to say they're animalist, greedy, divisive, and ruinous.

### **Animalist**

What do I mean by animalist? Instinct rules them. "These men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals, these are the very things that destroy them" (1:10). They "follow their own evil desires" (1:16). The "follow their own ungodly desires" (1:18). They "follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit" (1:19).

That's why sexual immorality in particular is so characteristic of such teaching—because it's a strong urge. The reasoning goes like this: "I was born with a particular urge. That means it's good, because I was born with it. And I'm good, aren't I? So any urge I have must be good." That's the reasoning of those who do not have the Spirit. They do not have within them a power different from their own desires, a power stronger than their desires that helps them fight those sinful urges.

The same is true of urges for other things, such as food. The Bible speaks of people "whose god is their stomach" (Philippians 3:19). Appetite rules. The sad thing is, entire systems of doctrine are created to defend the proposition that appetite is God, appetite is the Holy Spirit. Whatever your urge is, it must be right. That's just animalist thinking.

Animalist thinking comes up with doctrine to justify the behavior. In the church now, you might hear scholars downplay the Genesis story of God creating humans and instead say, "After all, we are only more highly evolved animals." That's a doctrine to support following your own evil desires and natural instincts without regard for what the Holy Spirit does in us. Beware of animalist teaching.

There's a glaring Old Testament example: Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli. Eli himself was devoted to the Lord, though he had faults, and one of them was not reigning in his sons when they were corrupting Israel. Hophni and Phinehas were priests. During offerings, there was a certain protocol: you respected the offerings, and then the priests would receive their portion after the offering was complete. But Hophni and Phinehas wanted the best cuts. Even before the sacrifice was complete, they speared the best parts of the meat from the Lord's offering to make sure they got their T-bone steaks.

And when they weren't stealing the prime cuts, they were sleeping with the women who served near the entrance to the tabernacle. Their gut and their sexual urges—their belly and what was below the belt—ruled them. That was Hophni and Phinehas. God declared them dead meat, and they were killed. They thought they could control God. They even brought the ark of the Lord's covenant into battle with them. God said, "Oh, you think you can just carry the ark into battle, and now I'll fight for you, when you treat my offerings and my people that way?" They were animalists, and they died like animals (1 Samuel 2-4).

## **Greedy**

False teachers are "shepherds who feed only themselves... They have rushed for profit into Balaam's error" (1:11-12). Balaam had a gift of prophecy, but along with that gift he had a hunger for money. He would sell his prophecies. If he could give a curse, he would make money. So he was hired by a king to do that. But the Lord wouldn't let him curse Israel, so he didn't get to collect his money. He was disappointed. So he suggested Plan B: "I can't curse Israel, but if you just get them to worship other gods and hook up with your pagan women, you can ruin them that way without any curses from me." Balaam got his payoff of money—and he got killed.

Rushing for profit into Balaam's error is saying religion is a great money-making racket. L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, once wrote—before he invented Scientology—"The best way to make money is to invent a religion." Then he invented one, and people followed him, including some Hollywood movie stars. He said before he ever invented Scientology that making up a religion was the best way to make money, and when he made one up, people fell for it.

If you're good enough, if you're skilled enough at concocting what people want and what pushes their buttons, you can get rich. "They boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage," and they're "shepherds who feed only themselves" (1:11, 16).

We live in a time where the number one form of Christianity in many places is the prosperity gospel. Huge churches in the United States and in Africa teach that if you have enough faith, you'll get rich. They focus on money and prosperity as the great reward of faith: everything will go your way if only you believe enough. It's a denial of the biblical gospel. It's exactly what Jude is talking about: shepherds who feed themselves. Scripture warns against those who "think godliness is a means to financial gain" (1 Timothy 6:5).

If you're looking out for false teachers, watch your checkbook. If they need three private jets to do the Lord's work, you would be wise to avoid them.

## **Divisive**

Another thing about enemy agents is that they are divisive. "These men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand" (1:10). They're always on the attack. If they don't get it, they lash out. They're "grumblers and fault-finders" (1:16). They are "scoffers" who mock the things of God. Jude says, "These are the men who divide you" (1:19).

Often they will deny that they are divisive and accuse those who oppose their lies of being divisive. People come along saying, “We need to tweak the biblical doctrine of creation. If you oppose me, you’re divisive. We’re going to teach that the Bible contains portions of the Word of God along with a whole bunch of errors. And if you’ve got a problem with that—wow, you’re divisive. We’re going to change Christian morality. We won’t leave the church, but we will agitate and lobby for changes in our churches or our denominations’ official positions. We’ll push and push and push until we make those changes in moral standards. And if you oppose the changes, you’re the troublemaker. You’re the one dividing, because all good Christians are welcoming at all times.” The people bringing the novelties, the division, and the changes accuse others of being the problem.

A classic example is King Ahab. He was supposed to be leading God’s people in the ways of the Lord. Instead, he continued the worship of golden calves and introduced new gods—the Asherah and the Baals—into Israel. When he ran into the prophet Elijah, Ahab’s first words were, “Is that you, you troubler of Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17). Elijah replied, “I have not made trouble for Israel, but you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the Lord’s commands and have followed the Baals” (1 Kings 18:18). Ahab and evil wife Jezebel were the real troublemakers.

Jude wants us to be very clear. When there are new doctrines and new approaches to morality, those who resist the novelties and “contend for the faith once for all entrusted to the saints” (1:3) might be labeled as inflexible, stick-in-the-muds, troublemaking cranks. But pay very careful attention to who’s really causing the trouble and the division. The scoffers, grumblers, and fault-finders are the ones finding fault with the true faith, with Jesus Christ, with the Bible, with the Christian way of life.

## **Ruinous**

These enemy agents are ruinous. Jude says they are “clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever” (Jude 12-13).

If you live in a land like Israel, as many of Jude’s readers did, you know you need rain. I grew up on a farm in an area that didn’t have heavy rainfall, and we were always hoping for rain at the right times. When clouds gathered, you said, “Yes! Rain is coming!” But sometimes the wind would blow those clouds away, and everything stayed just as dry. Jude says that’s what false teachers are like: they raise your hopes for refreshing, life-giving rain, but deliver nothing—just hot air.

Or take autumn trees. Jude says they’re twice dead. That may echo what the apostle John says about the lake of fire being the second death (Revelation 20:14). Jude may be hinting they’re headed for that second death. But he’s also saying they have neither fruit nor root. What’s a tree without roots? If a teacher has no roots in the faith once for all entrusted to the saints, in the historic doctrines of Christianity, then he’s dead. And without roots, there’s no fruit. No fruit of faith, no fruit of godliness—just empty branches or rotten fruit.

Another picture: wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame. You go to the beach hoping for beauty, maybe fishing, maybe wading into the waves. But instead the waves churn up filth, and all kinds of garbage wash ashore. That's what you get with these teachers. You hoped for something good; you got crud.

Or maybe you were looking for the North Star, a fixed point to guide your course through life toward God and eternity. Instead you fell for a wandering star, here one moment and gone the next. A planet, not a star, will lead you astray if you try to navigate by it. A shooting star may be impressive, but then it vanishes. That's what these false teachers are like—wandering stars, headed for the blackest darkness.

Jude uses these different words pictures, and you might say, "Well, he didn't really give us a lot of doctrinal detail about the teachers. He just said a lot of insulting things about them. They're clouds without rain, rotten autumn trees, cruddy waves churning up filth, wandering stars headed for outer darkness. Why does he have to keep on insulting them and piling it on?"

Perhaps because what we need is not just an accurate description of various heresies in one column and, in the other column, a nice polite description of what Christians ought to believe. Yes, it is helpful to have clarity about some of the heresies, and to have clarity about the faith once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3). But you also need a sense of disgust at what is truly disgusting, and a sense of danger about what imperils your life. We need to be awakened.

We need to sense and be outraged at what happens to our children when they are led astray by false teachers. We need to grasp the danger that faces us if we follow false teaching. We need warnings, and we need them in the tone Jude gives them.

If you want "nicer," if you say, "I prefer Jesus the sweet and gentle friend," then go read Matthew 23. Then you'll see how "nice" it is when Jesus calls false teachers a brood of vipers, whitewashed tombs full of rotting corpses, and other severe names. Don't try to be nicer than Jesus. He was outraged, not because he enjoyed being mean and insulting, but because terrible things were being done by false teachers and by those who led others into wickedness.

### **Expose enemy agents**

- Sneaky
- Godless
- Immoral
- Rebellious
- Animalist
- Greedy
- Divisive
- Ruinous

So expose the enemy agents. Have a sense of disgust and of deep concern about the impact they might have on those who follow in their path.

## **Fight for the Faith**

- Expect evil attacks
- Expound gospel truth
- Expose enemy agents

Expect evil attacks. Expound the truth once for all entrusted to the saints. Expose the enemy agents. Realize what they're like.

They will change God's grace and distort teaching to excuse immorality. In doing so, they deny Jesus Christ's right to rule their life. They deny that Jesus is sovereign, that Jesus is Lord. So contend. Realize that there's a faith that's been given. Don't trust those who say, "I have improvements that make it more believable"—but less worth believing. "I have made it easier to follow"—but less worth following."

Fight for the faith.

## **Prayer**

Lord, help us to hear your voice. Help us also to feel the passion and the outrage of your Holy Spirit against those who grieve the Spirit and deny the revelation of the Holy Spirit, and deny who Jesus Christ is for us.

Help us to live in the joy of your salvation and in the wonders of your grace, a grace that saves us and continually changes us, making us more and more into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then, Lord, as we go on, dedicated to standing for the faith and fighting for it, help us also to hear Jude's call to snatch people from the fire and rescue them, to be merciful to those who doubt, and to always rely on being kept by you.

Thank you, Lord, that amid all the trials of this life and all the attacks of the evil one, you have promised that our faith will not fail when we focus on you, and that your church will prevail even against the very gates of hell. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Jude: Fight for the Faith**  
**By David Feddes**  
**Slide Contents**

**General epistles (*Catholic epistles*)**

- James
- 1, 2 Peter
- 1, 2, 3 John
- Jude

**Who was Jude?**

- Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. (1:1)
- Son of Mary and Joseph
- Half-brother of Jesus
- Brother of James, Joseph, Simon, and sisters.

**Unimpressed**

“Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and **Judas**? Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” And they took offense at him. (Matthew 13:55-56)

**Brotherly unbelief**

His family said, “He is out of his mind.” (Mark 3:21)

Even his own brothers did not believe in him. (John 7:5)

**Who is Jesus?**

**Not just familiar older brother, but Messiah, Lord and Savior.**

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ... our only Sovereign and Lord (v. 1, 4)

... the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (v. 21)

## **Jude**

- Fight for the Faith
- Fear Eternal Fire
- Keep Being Kept

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### **Expose enemy agents**

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#### **Sneaky**

Certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. (1:4)

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. (Matthew 7:15)

Such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. (2 Cor 11:14-15)

#### **Godless**

... godless men... deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. (1:4)

... those who did not believe (1:5)

... ungodly... ungodly... ungodly... ungodly (1:15)

... do not have the Spirit (1:19)



## **Immoral**

... who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality... (1:4)

... gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. (1:7)

... these dreamers pollute their own bodies... (1:8)

## **Rebellious**

... the angels who did not keep their positions of authority (1:6)

... these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings (1:8)

... Korah's rebellion (1:11)

... there will be scoffers (1:18)

## **Sneaky, godless, immoral, rebellious dreamers**

Israel's watchmen are blind, they all lack knowledge... they lie around and dream, they love to sleep. (Isaiah 56:10)

I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, "I had a dream! I had a dream!" (Jer 23:25)

## **God vs. dreamers**

Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully... I am against those who prophesy false dreams... They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. (Jeremiah 23:28, 32)

## **Expose enemy agents**

- Sneaky
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### **Animalist**

... understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals (1:10)

... follow their own evil desires (1:16)

... follow their own ungodly desires (1:18)

... follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. (1:19)

### **Greedy**

... shepherds who feed only themselves... They have rushed for profit into Balaam's error. (1:11-12)

... they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. (1:16)

### **Divisive**

... these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand (1:10)

... grumblers and faultfinders (1:16)

... there will be scoffers... These are the men who divide you (1:18-19)

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They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. (1:12-13)

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