

“Defend the Faith!” – An Overview of Jude

Text: Jude 1-25

Key verse: Jude 20: “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”

Main idea: Defend the faith by watching out for false teachers and strengthening yourselves in the Gospel.

- I. Introductory matters
 - a. The identity of the author – Jude, the brother of Jesus

Jude 1a “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James...”
 - b. The recipients of the letter - “a Jewish-Christian community in a Gentile society”¹

Jude 1b “...To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ”
 - c. The purpose of the letter – Jude exhorts them to “Defend the faith!”
- II. The central message of the letter: Defend the faith by watching out for false teachers and strengthening yourselves in the Gospel. (5-23)
 - a. Defend the faith by watching out for false teachers. (5-19)
 - i. Jude describes these men in detail.
 1. The actions of these ‘teachers’ contradict the very faith they profess.
 - a. Their lives show no evidence of salvation.
 - i. Though they claim to believe in God, they act as if He does not exist.

Jude 4 “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

¹ Douglas Moo, *2 Peter & Jude*, NIV Application Commentary

for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”

- ii. They use God’s grace as an excuse to keep on sinning, when in fact it should prompt them to greater holiness.

Jude 4 “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.”

- iii. Their lives bear no fruit, and so they are dead in their sins.

Jude 12b “They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead.”

- b. They deny their own supposed Savior.

Jude 4 “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.”

- c. As leaders (“shepherds”) they only care for themselves.

Jude 12 “These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves.”

- 2. The false teachers actively engage in all kinds of immoral activities.

- a. They engage in all kinds of immorality, with no limits.

Jude 4 “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.”

- b. Specifically, they are sexually immoral.

Jude 7 “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.

Jude 8 “In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.”

- 3. These men reject any and all forms of authority.

- a. They reject God’s authority.

- i. Like Cain, the teachers despise God’s Word.

Jude 11 “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. “

- ii. Like the children of Israel, the teachers have not followed God’s commands.

Jude 5 “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.”

- b. They reject the church’s authority.

Jude 8 “In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

- i. Jude likens their lack of respect for authority to that of Korah, who rejected the authority of Moses.

Jude 11 “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. “

- ii. Their unwillingness to take direction from anyone is evident from the metaphors Jude uses to describe them.

Jude 12b “They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind...”

Jude 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.”

- iii. We need to be guard against an attitude of not wanting to be under any kind of authority.

c. They reject the authority of angels.

Jude 8 “In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.”

Slander = to speak falsely about someone
Celestial beings = angels

- i. In what sense do these men speak falsely of angels?
- ii. The key to answering this question is found in an often forgotten truth: angels were the ones who gave the Law to Moses. They are mediators of the Old Covenant.

Acts 7:38 “This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and *who was* with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.”

- iii. We have already said that Jude’s false teacher’s reject God’s law.
- iv. Therefore, it would seem that by rejecting God’s Law, these teachers reject the very authority of angels (slandering them as evil).
- v. And so, these teachers slander angels (defame their name) by rejecting the Law that they bring.
- vi. Yet, in all of this, these teachers fail to recognize who it is they are bad-mouthing. Angels are much more powerful than they, and

should not be spoken of lightly.

Jude 10 "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."

- vii. Jude uses a story of Michael disputing with Satan to prove that angels should not be spoken of carelessly.

Jude 9 "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!"

1. This story is not found in our Bibles.
2. It is a story that comes at the end of a Pseudopigraphal (falsely attributed) work, *The Testament of Moses*. It reads:

"When Moses died on the mountain, the Lord sent Michael the archangel to remove the body. But the devil brought slander against Moses, saying, "Because he murdered the Egyptian, he is not worthy to receive such an honorable burial." Yet Michael, not tolerating slander against him, said to the devil, "May God rebuke you!""

3. It is sometimes difficult to tell if this particular account was a real, historical event.
4. In either case, we should not miss the point of the story, which is that if Michael, who is archangel, did not even feel right rebuking the devil, how much more should we refrain from speaking rashly about angels!

5. We should be careful in how we speak about angels – both elect and fallen.

4. These men are characterized by untamed tongues.

a. They grumble.

Jude 16 “These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.”

b. They are highly critical of others.

Jude 16 “These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.”

c. They boast.

Jude 16 “These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.”

d. They flatter others insincerely.

Jude 16 “These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.”

e. They mock believers.

Jude 17 “But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

Jude 18 “They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.”

f. They seek to create divisions among God’s people.

Jude 19 “These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.”

- g. Are we keeping watch for people who speak like these men do? And (even more) do we see any of these tongue-characteristics in our own lives?
- ii. Jude makes it clear that these teachers will certainly face judgment.

- 1. Their condemnation predicted

- a. The Old Testament prophesied their destruction.

Jude 4a “For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you.”

There are many passages that Jude might have had in mind here. One such passage could be:

Prov 16:4 “The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil.”

Prov 16:5 “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; assuredly, he will not be unpunished.”

- b. Extra-biblical prophets (like Enoch) prophesied their destruction.

Jude 14 “Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with

thousands upon thousands of his holy ones
Jude 15 ”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.”

- c. Jesus’ apostles prophesied their destruction.

Jude 17 “But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.”

Jude 18 “They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.”

Jude 19 “These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.”

- 2. Their condemnation described (in similes)

- a. Like the children of Israel who did not believe, these men will be destroyed.

Jude 5 “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.”

- b. Like fallen angels (demons) who rejected authority, these men are doomed for judgment one day.

Jude 6 “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.”

- c. Like the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, these teachers will suffer eternal fire.

Jude 7 “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.”

- d. Like Korah, they will be swallowed up for their rebellion.

Jude 11 “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.”

- e. Like wandering stars, they will spend eternity in the blackest darkness.

Jude 13 “They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.”

- f. The application here is twofold:
 - i. We can be confident that God will judge those who oppose authority today, because we have clear examples from the past.
 - ii. We should delude ourselves in thinking that we will escape God's judgment if we fall into the same category as these false teachers.

b. Defend the faith by strengthening yourselves and other up in the Gospel. (20-25)

i. Defend the faith by building each other up.

Jude 20 “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”

1. Teach the Word & sound doctrine to each other.

2 Tim 4:2 “Preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

2. Encourage one another.

1 Thess 5:11 “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

3. Love one another (and so build unity)

1 Jn 3:11 “For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

ii. Defend the faith by praying in the Holy Spirit.

Jude 20 “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”

iii. Defend the faith by having mercy on those who struggle in the faith.

1. Have patience with those who doubt.

Jude 22 “Be merciful to those who doubt”

2. Rescue those who are falling away from the faith.

Jude 23 “snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”

3. Forgive and welcome back those who have previously fallen away.

Jude 23 “snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”

- iv. Defend the faith by remembering that it is God who will ultimately keep his church from falsehood and ruin.

Jude 24 “To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy

Jude 25 “to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”

Application: