

Jude 1 to 4

I. Introduction:

Tolerance is the last virtue of an immoral society. -- G.K. Chesterton

- A. Do you agree with this quote? Why or why not?

- B. How do many Christians and non-Christians view pastors and scholars who confront false teaching?

- C. What is the danger of tolerating false doctrine?

II. Background: Jude, the brother of Jesus pens this decidedly negative epistle to protect his flock from the enticing indulgences of Christian apostates. In a word, these false teachers are libertines. They assume that the grace of God revealed in Christ gives them the “liberty” to do just about anything they want to do (**2 Peter 2:19 – 20; Jude 4**). They have no use for any kind of authority (especially spiritual authorities, like angels; cf. **2 Peter 2:10 – 11; Jude 8 – 9**). And so they engage in all manner of “sins of the flesh”: illicit sex, perhaps including homosexuality, excess drinking and eating, greed for money (**2 Peter 2:13 – 16, 18 – 20; Jude 16, 19**). What is especially shocking is that both Peter and Jude make clear that these profligates are claiming to be Christians (**2 Peter 2:1, 21 – 22; Jude 4**). They are, in effect at least, “denying the Lord” and are therefore destined for the condemnation reserved for those who rebel against the Lord.¹

III. Proposition:

Today we will examine the priority of confronting heresy, so that we will be vigilant to protect our flock and family from the deceits of the enemy.

IV. Text:

A. Desires of Jude (vv. 1-2)

¹ Moo, Douglas J. “Introduction to 2 Peter and Jude” In *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: 2 Peter and Jude*. By Douglas J. Moo, 15-31. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1996.

Jude 1-2 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.

1. How does Jude describe himself (v. 1)?
2. Why does Jude refrain from describing himself as the brother of Jesus?
3. In addition to refusing to label himself the brother of Jesus, why is he content with the title “brother of James”? What does this demonstrate about his character?
4. How does Jude describe his audience (v. 1)?
5. What does it mean for a believer to be “called”?
6. What does the phrase “Beloved in God the Father” suggest about the reason why God selected the called?

Romans 9:25 As He says also in Hosea, “I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, ‘MY PEOPLE,’ AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, ‘BELOVED.’ ”

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

7. To what event does “kept for Jesus Christ” allude? Who is doing the “keeping”?
8. Why would all three of these descriptions – called, beloved, and kept – be of comfort to a church under attack by false teaching?
9. What does Jude wish upon his audience (v. 2)?

Note: “Mercy” is not often found in New Testament prayer-wishes (see, however, *1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2 John 3*); “grace” is usually found in its place. But the meaning is much the same: God’s unmerited favor bestowed on sinners for their salvation. By “peace,” Jude may mean the inner contentment that comes from a restored relationship to God in Christ — the “peace of God.” But it more likely means our “peace with God,” that is, the new status of reconciliation that God provides in his Son for us. Similarly, then, “love” means not our love for others, but God’s love for us.²

B. Declaration of War (vv. 3-4)

Jude 3-4 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.

1. What was Jude’s original intent in writing this letter (v. 3)?
2. Why did Jude change his mind (vv. 3-4)?
3. What does Jude’s topic change suggest about the urgency of the issue? And for that matter, what does Jude’s topic change suggest about the importance of “negative” messages?
4. According to *verse 3*, what is the purpose of Jude’s epistle? What does he call the congregation to do? How are they to do so?

Note: The word for *contend* is a combination of the preposition *epi* “against” with the Greek word for fight, struggle, or strive - “*agonizomai*” (where we get the verb agonize).

5. What is meant by the “faith”? (Hint: remember that this was the faith “which was once and for all handed down to the saints.”)

² Moo, Douglas J. *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: 2 Peter and Jude*. 224. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1996.

Galatians 1:23 but only, they kept hearing, “He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.”

Acts 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

6. How did the false teachers infiltrate the congregation? How would the rank and file esteem these men?

pareisdúō; fut. *pareisdúsō*, from *pará* unto or at the side of, and *eisdúō*, to enter in, which is from *eis*, into, and *dúō*, to go down, sink. To enter in craftily, secretly, without notice, like a thief.³

7. How do modern day false teachers gain acceptance from churches, Christians, etc.?
8. According to *verse 4*, what is the fate of these false teachers?
9. What is the fruit of their false teaching? What doctrines do they twist to produce this heresy?
10. According to the end of *verse 4*, what is the ultimate result of their teaching?

V. Thought Questions:

- A. Who is more dangerous, a preacher who teaches ninety five percent truth and five percent error or a preacher who teaches five percent truth and ninety five percent error? Why?
- B. How would you answer a person who objects to pointing out heresy as being unloving?

³Zodhiates, Spiros: *The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament*. electronic ed. Chattanooga, TN : AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993, S. G3921

C. In what ways can “heresy hunters” be unloving? In contrast, how can we contend for the faith in a loving way?

VI. Conclusion:

In a day and age where it is more wrong to say someone else is wrong than it is to actually be wrong, Jude offers some welcome exhortations. Christianity is a truth based faith. It depends upon propositional facts such as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as well as the need to be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven. The Father of Lies, the Serpent who deceived Eve and the accuser of the faithful wields the weapons of deceit to lure men and women from these truths. While our tolerant society may make it wrong to say things are wrong, as a church we must boldly defend the truth “*which was once for all handed down to the saints.*”