



Almont Vineyard Church

Faith Under Fire Series

October 24, 2026

Opening Monologue

Welcome to the AVC APP. Below you'll find commentary, spiritual reflections, devotional questions, and more—all designed to help you go deeper into God's Word and this week's sermon.

This week we begin a new series titled "Faith Under Fire." We will dig into the short but powerful book of Jude. Theologians Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa describe Jude this way:

"Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible, but it hits harder than almost anything else in the New Testament. It rips the mask off false teachers—showing who they really are, how they live, and why God will judge them—using vivid pictures from the Old Testament so no one can miss the point. At the same time, Jude calls ordinary believers to do two things: build up their faith in what is true and fight for the gospel that has been handed down to them. In just twenty-five verses, he warns the church that danger has already slipped in the door, and he urges God's people to stand firm before it is too late." (Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. 1983. Talk thru the Bible.)

In Week 1 we will come to understand that every Christian is called to contend for the faith we have received in Jesus Christ. We are called to defend God's Word and refuse to be polluted or persuaded by man-made doctrines and beliefs that endanger us and our families.

Come and be equipped and encouraged by God's Word.

In Christ,

Rev. Pastor Brad

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Week 1 Series: Faith Under Fire" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

Jude 1-4, & 20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jude%201-4&version=NIV>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jude%2020&version=NIV>

Revelation 22:12-18

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2022%3A12-18&version=NIV>

2 Timothy 3:16-17

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Timothy%203%3A16-17%20&version=NIV>

Historical Snapshot of Jude

Understanding the Book of Jude

Date:

Most scholars place the writing of Jude between about A.D. 66 and 80. This was still in the apostolic era, after the major letters of Paul and after Peter's second letter (which most likely came first, around A.D. 64–66). Jude appears to have known Peter's warning that false teachers would arise, and he writes to say that the warning has already become reality. The exact year is not certain, and Jude's silence about the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 does not prove he wrote before that event.

Setting:

The exact place where Jude wrote is unknown, and he does not name a specific city or region. His letter has a general address, yet he clearly has a particular group of believers in mind who were facing a real and immediate problem. False teachers had already "crept in unnoticed" among them. These ungodly people were proud, divisive, and dangerous. They turned the grace of God into a license for immorality and denied Jesus Christ in both their teaching and their behavior. They flattered people, infiltrated Christian meetings, and caused splits in the church. The progress of the faith in that area was under serious threat.

To whom & why it was written:

Jude wrote to Christians—people who were already called, loved by God the Father, and kept by Jesus Christ. His readers were most likely a mixture of Jewish and Gentile believers. He originally planned to write a letter about the common salvation that all believers share. Instead, he felt compelled to change course because of the urgent danger. False teachers had slipped into the church and were corrupting the gospel from the inside. That is why Jude's letter is a strong call to action. He urges believers to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3, 1984 NIV). The word "contend" comes from the world of athletic competition and wrestling—it pictures hard, diligent effort. Jude is not calling for a quiet, private faith. He is calling the church to stand firm, build itself up in the most holy faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, keep itself in the love of God, and show mercy to those who are wavering, while refusing to compromise the truth. He reminds his readers of God's past judgments on unbelieving Israel, rebellious angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, and men like Cain, Balaam, and Korah, then ends with a powerful reminder that God himself is able to keep believers from stumbling.

Understanding Jude & who he was

The letter was written by Jude, the half-brother of Jesus and the brother of James. James was the well-known leader of the Jerusalem church and the author of the New Testament letter that bears his name. Jude identifies himself simply as "a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James" (Jude 1, 1984 NIV). He does not claim special honor because he grew up in the same household as Jesus. Like his brothers, he did not believe in Jesus before the resurrection (John 7:5; Acts 1:14). After the resurrection, he became a humble servant of Christ. He is not the apostle Jude (Judas the son of James) listed among the Twelve. The New Testament tells us little else about

him, but what we do know shows a man who understood that being related to Jesus by blood did not automatically make him a believer—only faith in the risen Lord did that. He wrote with urgency and pastoral concern, wanting the church to be protected and to stand firm in the faith that had been handed down.

Sources: 3-7

Jude's Transformation

Jude's spiritual journey illuminates one of Scripture's most profound transformations—a man who lived in the same household as Jesus yet remained unconvinced of his messianic identity until the resurrection vindicated everything Christ claimed. This trajectory deserves deeper theological reflection because it challenges our assumptions about faith, family proximity, and the power of resurrection encounter.

The Crisis of Unbelief

During Jesus' ministry on earth, his brothers did not believe in him. This wasn't mere skepticism—it represented genuine theological opposition rooted in what seemed like rational grounds. The crucifixion shattered any faint hopes that Jesus might prove himself the Messiah, for his death appeared to be God's verdict on his claims, making it impossible for them to hold that he was the Messiah. Jesus' arrogation of the title of one sent from God to fulfill the prophecies and bring in the Kingdom of Heaven must have seemed to Jude signs of over-weening self-exaltation, and even of madness.

What intensifies this picture is that the brothers were not with Jesus during the last scenes—not at the Last Supper, not in the Garden, not at the cross, and not at his tomb. Jude lacked the apostolic privilege of intimate instruction and post-resurrection appearances. His unbelief operated in a vacuum of experiential evidence.

The Resurrection Catalyst

Jesus, after his resurrection, made a personal appearance to James, and Jesus' time with James must have affected James profoundly, for he became a believer. While Scripture doesn't explicitly record a resurrection appearance to Jude, at some point, Jude also was converted and Acts 1:14 tells us that Mary and the brothers of Jesus were part of the 120 gathered together in the upper room between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, so they were all believers by then.

The resurrection functioned as the decisive proof that transformed skepticism into conviction. For Jude, encountering the risen Christ—whether directly or through the testimony of others—rewrote his entire understanding of his brother's identity and mission.

Identity Reorientation: From Family to Servanthood

Remarkably, Jude did not refer to himself as a brother of Jesus Christ, but simply identified himself as a servant of Jesus Christ, not as Jesus' brother. Not wishing to claim an authority based on mere blood-relationship to Jesus, Jude avoided calling himself "brother of the Lord," instead basing his authority to address his readers on his being "a servant of Jesus Christ".

This deliberate choice carries profound theological weight. The word translated "servant" means "slave," one who is subject to the will and wholly at the disposal of a master, expressing absolute devotion and subjection

to Christ Jesus. Jude's conversion didn't elevate him through family connection—it humbled him into servanthood. Jude and James must have recalled childhood memories as they considered their new spiritual relationship with Jesus, perhaps flinching at some of their words of mockery, but they became believers, contenders for the faith, and true servants of their Lord and Savior.

Missionary Vocation and Apostolic Authority

According to 1 Corinthians 9:5, Jesus' brothers became traveling missionaries, and this general reference probably includes Jude, especially as it most likely does not include James, who seems to have remained in Jerusalem. Jesus' brothers engaged in the same type of pioneer missionary work as Paul, and that likely included Jude. On the basis of this epistle, Jude had become a major leader in the church, for there is a distinct tone of authority in this letter.

From family skeptic to itinerant missionary—Jude's transformation extended beyond personal conversion into active kingdom work. He most likely traveled as a missionary and naturally would have wanted to write a letter to his converts whose faith was being threatened by false teaching.

Theological Implications for Contemporary Faith

Jude's narrative teaches several critical lessons. First, proximity to truth requires personal response. Growing up with Jesus didn't automatically produce faith; Jude had to encounter the risen Christ through his own conviction. Cultural Christianity or inherited privilege cannot substitute for genuine conversion. Second, resurrection faith transforms identity. Jude didn't cling to family status; instead, he embraced a radically new identity as Christ's servant, suggesting that authentic conversion realigns our entire self-understanding around Christ's lordship rather than earthly advantages.

Third, former skeptics often become the most zealous defenders. Jude's letter addresses false teachers with urgency and authority—perhaps because he understood intimately how easily people can resist truth. His own journey from mockery to servanthood equipped him to contend for the faith with credibility and passion.

For modern believers, Jude models what it means to allow resurrection reality to fundamentally reorient priorities. We too must move beyond nominal faith, beyond inherited religion, toward a personal encounter with the risen Christ that transforms us from skeptics into servants, from observers into missionaries, from those claiming earthly advantages into those wholly devoted to Christ's kingdom.

Sources: 8-11

Spiritual Reflection

We are Called & Loved By Christ

We live in a world that tells us life is mainly about the individual. We are taught to look out for our own best interests, chase the American Dream, and find happiness through personal success. God's Word speaks a very different message. It says that every Christian has been called by God with a purpose. That calling is bigger than the nine-to-five workweek, though it should shape how we work and how we treat the people around us. Even more, we are not only called—we are loved by Jesus Christ with the same love he once showed to the

whole nation of Israel. That is an amazing gift. It is the same love that led him to die on the cross for our personal sins.

Jude begins his short letter by writing “to those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ” (Jude 1, 1984 NIV). He is writing to believers, not to outsiders. This is a letter for Christians—people who already belong to Jesus—because there are things we need to hear even when we would rather not face them.

Jude describes his readers in three clear ways that show what it means to be a Christian. First, they are called. A person is a Christian because God has called him or her. The call is not a vague invitation we might ignore. It is God’s powerful summons that brings us to faith in Jesus through the gospel. The important thing is that we answer the call when it comes, much like we pick up the phone when it rings. Second, they are loved (or sanctified) by God the Father. This means God has set us apart—set us apart from the world and set us apart for himself. Third, they are kept (or preserved) by Jesus Christ. Jesus is our guardian and protector. He holds us securely.

This calling and love are not individualistic. God does not call us into a private, isolated faith. As Mark Roberts notes, God calls all his saints—not just apostles or leaders—to belong to Jesus Christ and to live as people set apart for relationship with him and for his work in the world. Our calling is shared. We are called together with everyone, everywhere, who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as God once called Israel to be his special people and loved them as his own, now those who trust in Jesus share in that same calling and love. The privileges once belonging to Israel now belong to every believer in Christ. Thomas Schreiner points out that Jude is highlighting God’s grace, not our worthiness. God loves us because of who he is, not because of anything we have earned.

This love and calling also reframe ordinary life. Being called by God does not always require a dramatic change of job or location. Often it means staying in the situation we were already in—whether married or single, employee or employer—and living it in a new way as someone who belongs to Christ. A person who was a slave when called, for example, could remain in that role yet see himself as free in the Lord. The calling does not erase our daily circumstances; it transforms how we live inside them. We are called to walk in a manner worthy of that calling: to live in the good works God has prepared, to use our freedom to serve others in love, to pursue holy lives, and to treat one another with humility, gentleness, and patience so that the unity of the church is protected.

Because we are called and loved, we also share a common salvation. Our salvation is not cheap or automatic for everyone; it is “common” in the sense that we are saved together, in community. There is not one way for the rich and another for the poor, or one way for one kind of Christian and another way for others. We stand shoulder to shoulder with believers across the generations—strong and weak, young and old. We are part of a great company of people who belong to Christ. As Charles Spurgeon observed, believers who are in Christ are closer than they often realize, and their unity in essential truth is a powerful force. Surveys that suggest a person can be a good Christian without the church miss this biblical reality. God has called us into fellowship with his Son and with one another.

This is why Jude urgently calls believers to contend for the faith. The word he uses comes from the world of athletic competition and wrestling. It pictures hard, diligent effort. Because we have been called, loved, and kept by God, we are to stand firm for the gospel that has been handed down to us and to protect the church

from teaching that twists it. Our identity is not self-made. It rests on God's prior call and his unending love. That love will carry us into his future kingdom and glory. In the meantime, we take hold of the eternal life to which we have been called and live it out together—impacting the people around us at work and at home—because we are called and loved by Christ.

Sources: 12-16

How Jude Speaks to the Church Today

Jude's short letter is not a museum piece from the first century. It is a clear, urgent word for the church in every generation—including ours. The specific people and places have changed, but the dangers he described have not disappeared. False teaching still slips into churches quietly. Grace is still twisted into permission to sin. The lordship of Jesus is still softened or set aside. And believers are still tempted to stay silent rather than contend for the faith that has been handed down to them. In a culture that often treats truth as flexible and sin as questionable, Jude's letter functions as a diagnostic tool that helps us recognize and resist the spiritual erosion that threatens the church.

False Teachers Still Creep In Unnoticed

Jude warned that certain ungodly people "have secretly slipped in among you" (Jude 4, 1984 NIV). They did not arrive with a sign that said "false teacher." They looked like part of the church while undermining the gospel from the inside. The same pattern continues. Teaching that treats grace as a free pass to ignore holiness, that downplays the authority of Scripture, or that redefines Jesus as someone other than our only Sovereign and Lord still finds its way into churches, small groups, and online spaces. Just as the false teachers of Jude's day exploited a spiritual vacuum by claiming they could live however they wished without sinning, modern voices sometimes offer a version of Christianity that separates God's love from God's call to holiness. Jude calls us to stay alert rather than assume that everything said in Christian circles is safe.

We Are Still Called to Contend for the Faith

Jude's central command is to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The word "contend" pictures hard, diligent effort—like an athlete or wrestler who refuses to quit. This is not a call to be harsh or quarrelsome. It is a call to know the gospel well, to hold it firmly, and to protect the church from teaching that distorts it. In a culture that prizes personal opinion and private spirituality, Jude reminds us that the faith is not something we invent or adjust to fit the times. It has been delivered once for all, and we are stewards of it. The apostolic message has been entrusted to God's people not merely to proclaim but to safeguard. Jude 3 remains a characteristic call to defend and preserve the gospel when cultural pressures push congregations toward accommodation.

Grace Must Never Become a License for Immorality

The false teachers Jude opposed "change the grace of our God into a license for immorality" (Jude 4). They used the language of freedom and grace while living for their own desires and causing division. The same temptation exists today. True grace does not lower God's standard of holiness; it empowers us to live it. Jude's letter pushes us to reject any message that separates God's love from God's call to purity and obedience. Where authority resides in the church is still a live question. Jude answers by pointing us back to the faith once for all delivered, not to the shifting preferences of the age.

Our Identity as Called, Loved, and Kept Gives Us Both Security and Responsibility

Jude writes to people who are already “called, loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ” (Jude 1). Because God has called and loved us, we are secure in him. At the same time, that identity summons us to action. We are to build ourselves up in the most holy faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, keep ourselves in God’s love, and show mercy to those who are wavering—while hating the sin that destroys (Jude 20–23). Contending for the faith is not about winning arguments; it is about loving the church enough to protect it and rescue those being pulled away. Jude balances doctrinal vigilance with a pastor’s heart. His ambition is not merely to dismantle error but to build up loyal believers in Christ and to help those in danger of being swept away.

God Is Still Able to Keep His People

Jude ends with one of the strongest promises in the New Testament: God “is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy” (Jude 24). The threats are real, but the God who called and loves his people is greater. This keeps the church from panic and from pride. We contend, we discern, and we stand firm—not in our own strength, but because the One who keeps us is faithful. Jude’s letter, written for the end times and focused on the danger of apostasy, describes a battle for truth that continues until the church’s end. Yet the same God who is able to keep us remains our confidence. In short, Jude tells the church today what he told the church in the first century: danger can enter quietly, so stay awake; the faith is worth defending, so contend for it; grace is not permission to sin, so hold both love and holiness; and the God who called and loves you is able to keep you to the end. His answers to first-century challenges remain viable. We are called to become discerning defenders—neither naively accepting every teaching nor rigidly rejecting legitimate growth, but remaining anchored in apostolic truth while extending grace to those who are wavering. That message is as timely now as it was then.

Sources: 17-22

Commentary on Main Texts

Jude 1-4

Half-truths, statements taken out of context, misleading descriptions, words changed in meaning, and outright fabrications are designed to deceive, to hide the truth. Liars have many motives: to make a sale, to win an election, to hide wrongdoing, to enhance an image, to beat a rival, to cheat someone, to gain the favor of a coach, teacher, friend, parent, employer, or spouse. Whatever the reason, the real character of the liar is exposed when the truth is revealed.

In the early years of the church, liars arose—truth-twisters who deliberately rejected God’s Word and the lordship of Christ and designed, instead, their own theology. The motive for these men was to gain power and money. Responding to this threat to the church, the apostles and other church leaders published warnings, urging Christians to be alert, to know the truth, and to reject the liars and their lies. That’s what motivated Jude to pen his short letter.

As you read Jude, think about the possible false teachers in your world and determine to “contend for the faith” (v. 3).

SETTING

Perhaps written from Palestine in about a.d. 65.

Jude's location and the date of his writing are unknown. As James' brother and active in the Jerusalem church, the most likely place would seem to be Palestine. But Paul implies that Jude and his wife may have served as traveling missionaries ("Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas?"—1 Corinthians 9:5). If this is true, Jude could have been almost anywhere in the Roman Empire when he wrote this letter. Also, because neither 2 Peter nor Jude refers to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, both letters probably were written before a.d. 70.

Both the location and date of this letter are affected by the fact that it is similar to 2 Peter. Consider these common phrases and similar passages (all from the niv):

- "There will be false teachers among you" (2 Peter 2:1)

"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you" (Jude 4).

- "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people ..." (2 Peter 2:4–5).

"The Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. 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" (Jude 5–6).

- "This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings" (2 Peter 2:10).

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

- "But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish" (2 Peter 2:12).

"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" (Jude 10).

- "They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you" (2 Peter 2:13).

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

- "These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them" (2 Peter 2:17).

"They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind... They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever" (Jude 12–13).

- "In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires" (2 Peter 3:3).

"In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires" (Jude 18).

The coincidence of similarity between Jude and 2 Peter can be explained in three ways:

1. Peter used Jude as a resource. If this is true, then Jude would have to have been written before Peter wrote 2 Peter (a.d. 67). Also, he would have had to be close to Peter, or, if Jude wrote from Jerusalem, there would have to have been time for the letter to get to Peter in Rome. A date of a.d. 65 would fit this possibility.

2. Jude used 2 Peter as a resource. In this case, 2 Peter would have to have been written before Jude (and the location is also a factor). A date of about a.d. 69 would fit this possibility.

3. Both Jude and Peter used a common resource. This possibility would allow many possible dates and locations.

The similarity between the two letters indicates that they probably were written at about the same time, since they both addressed the same issue faced by the church, a pre-Gnostic heresy.

AUDIENCE

Jewish Christians scattered throughout the world.

Little is known for sure about the intended readers of this letter except that it is addressed, “To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ” (v. 1). This description sounds as though Jude was writing to all believers and not a specific church or segment of the church. His expressions “among you” (v. 4) and “your love feasts” (v. 12) seem to indicate that he has churches in mind. And Jude’s appeal to Old Testament personalities and stories (for example, the Exodus, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses, Cain, Balaam, Korah’s rebellion, and Enoch) seems to indicate that his intended audience had a strong Jewish heritage. As a Jewish believer himself, Jude’s tendency would have been to minister among Hebrew Christians, like his brother James, who specifically addressed his letter “to the twelve tribes” (James 1:1).

Some think that Jude was writing to the same audience for whom 2 Peter was intended, because of the heresy addressed by both letters. But there is no evidence for this. Evidently these false teachers were becoming a problem for most of the churches. Paul addressed a similar problem in his letter to the Colossians.

It is likely, therefore, that Jude wrote this letter to Jewish Christians to whom he had ministered, in Palestine and elsewhere.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE FOR WRITING

To warn believers about false teachers and their heresy.

Jude wrote that at first he had intended to “write ... about the salvation we share” (v. 3); however, the Holy Spirit compelled him to warn his friends and fellow believers about the false teachers who had infiltrated their churches (v. 4). These men were ignoring the teachings of the apostles (v. 17), ridiculing theology (vv. 10, 18), and twisting the message of God’s grace in order to excuse their sexual immorality. Jude urged his readers to “contend for the faith” (v. 3), build themselves up in their understanding of God and his Word (v. 20), pray (v. 20), reject all false teaching (v. 23), and focus on Christ (vv. 24–25).

Beyond the description in the text, little is known about these false teachers. However, the teachers’ arrogance, immorality, and claim to superior knowledge sound as though they were forerunners of what became Gnosticism in the second century. For more on Gnosticism, see the introduction to 2 Peter.

MESSAGE

False Teachers, Apostasy.

False Teachers (vv. 4, 8, 10–19). Jude warned against false teachers and leaders who reject the lordship of Christ, undermine the faith of others, and lead people astray. He pointed out that these men had already infiltrated the church, making them even more dangerous. He also explained that these leaders and any who follow them will be severely punished by God.

Importance for Today. We must stoutly defend Christian truth, avoiding all compromise of the basics of the faith and rejecting all who would twist Scripture to fit their own immoral agenda. Make sure that you avoid leaders and teachers (even in the church) who change the Bible to suit their own purposes. Genuine servants of God will faithfully portray Christ in their words and conduct. Watch out for anyone who tries to make Jesus anything less than the King of kings and Lord of lords and who tries to make the Bible anything less than the inspired, inerrant Word of God.

Apostasy (vv. 4–9, 10–11, 14–19, 22–25). Jude also warned against apostasy—turning away from Christ—presenting examples from the Old Testament of those who turned away and were punished. We must remember that God punishes all who rebel against him. We must be careful not to drift away from a firm commitment to Christ.

Jude

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

Jude's letter focuses on "apostasy"—when people turn away from God's truth and embrace false teachings. Jude reminded his readers of God's judgment on those who had left the faith in the past. This letter warns against false teachers—in this case, probably those who were promoting an early form of Gnosticism. Gnostics opposed two of the basic tenets of Christianity—the incarnation of Christ and the call to Christian ethics. Jude wrote to combat these false teachings and to encourage true doctrine and right conduct.

Some people avoid studying the Bible because they think doctrine is dry and boring. Yet this should be exciting and important work. Theological opinions and options have led to revolutions, battles, and ongoing disputes in the world, even today. Those who refuse to learn correct doctrine are susceptible to false teaching because they are not grounded in God's truth. It is imperative to understand the basic doctrines of the Christian faith in order to recognize false doctrines and prevent wrong teaching from undermining our faith and hurting others. Jude is a short letter with only one chapter. Verses are referred to by verse number only. For example, (v. 2) refers you to verse 2.

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. Jude was a common Jewish name. Scholars have various opinions about Jude's identity. Some identify him with the apostle Judas (John 14:22; Acts 1:13); however, verse 17 of this letter seems to reveal that the author was not an apostle. Others say he was a companion of Paul known as "Judas called Barsabbas" (Acts 15:22). However, the overwhelming majority consider him to be Jude (or Judas), a half brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). In his introduction, Jude identified himself as brother of James. This James was not one of the apostles named James, but another of Jesus' half brothers (he is referred to in Galatians 1:19). Mary was their mother, and Joseph was their father. (Although Mary was Jesus' true mother, God was Jesus' true Father.) In the days of Jesus' ministry on earth, his brothers did not believe in him (John 7:3–10). However, Paul recorded that Jesus, after his resurrection, made a personal appearance to James (1 Corinthians 15:7). Jesus' time with James must have affected James profoundly, for he became a believer. At some point, Jude also was converted (Acts 1:14). (For more information on Jude and James, see the introduction to Jude.)

James, the Lord's brother, was martyred in a.d. 62, a few years before this letter was written. James was well known among the believers and his name still was highly regarded; thus Jude could simply identify himself as James' brother, knowing that there would be no mistaking his identity. Jude and James were not apostles, but James had been one of the leaders in the church in Jerusalem; later he became head of the church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18) and author of the New Testament book of James. Apparently Jude held some authority (as revealed in this letter). He most likely traveled as a missionary (see 1 Corinthians 9:5) and naturally would have wanted to write a letter to his converts whose faith was being threatened by false teaching.

Oddly enough, Jude did not refer to himself as a brother of Jesus Christ. It would seem that this would have carried even more authority. Like James (see James 1:1), Jude simply identified himself as a servant of Jesus Christ, not as Jesus' brother. This may have been because the use of the terms "brother" and "sister" had come to refer to the spiritual relationship all believers had to Jesus Christ and to one another. Thus, Jesus' half brothers refrained from referring to themselves by their family relationship with Jesus. As believers, they focused on their spiritual relationship with their Lord and considered themselves privileged to be called his servants. They had been bought (or redeemed) from slavery to sin with the price of Christ's blood (1 Corinthians 7:23). Paul also referred to himself as Christ's servant (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:1).

The word translated "servant" means "slave," one who is subject to the will and wholly at the disposal of a master. To describe themselves thus, the believers were expressing their absolute devotion and subjection to Christ Jesus. The New Testament teaches that true leaders must serve others. Jesus exemplified this throughout his life (see Mark 10:35–45; Philippians 2:5–8).

Imagine what childhood memories Jude and James must have recalled as they considered their new spiritual relationship with Jesus. Surely Jesus must have been an exceptional older brother. Perhaps they flinched at some of their words of mockery (as recorded in John 7:3–5). But they became believers, contenders for the faith, and true servants of their Lord and Savior.

To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ. Jude did not specify any destination for his letter. Instead, he addressed it to believers, whom he described in a beautiful triad:

1. Those who have been called. This phrase pictured what happened in the past—believers have been called to be saved. Being "called" also is referred to as "elected," "chosen," or "predestined." God's Spirit calls people out of darkness into the light of Christ, convinces them of their sinfulness, shows them what Christ can do for them, and then helps them to accept Christ. This occurs by God's grace and love alone. (See also Romans 1:6–7; 8:28–30; 11:29; 1 Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 4:4; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:3, 10–11.)

2. Loved by God the Father. The verb form of "loved" refers to a past action that continues into the present. God's love prompted his call; his love will continue now and forever. God's love never changes. The believers across the ancient world, often facing persecution, could count on the fact that they were and always would be enfolded by God's love. God had become their "Father" by adopting them as his children. (See also Galatians 3:26–4:7.)

3. Kept by Jesus Christ. Believers are "kept" (or guarded) by Jesus Christ for the certain rewards of Christ's promised blessing. Peter explained that believers could be assured of "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven" (1 Peter 1:4 niv). Also, believers have security in their salvation: "through faith

[believers] are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5 niv). Believers are kept safe for Christ, guarded as his property, to be claimed upon his return. At Christ's second coming, believers will be ready to receive their full salvation and to live eternally with him. (See also Romans 8:18–39; 2 Timothy 1:12.)

2 May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance. In another triad, Jude described his prayer for the believers. He wanted them to have in abundance (that is, in overflowing measure) mercy, peace, and love.

1. Mercy carries with it the Old Testament picture of God's loving-kindness or compassion. God's mercy helps believers day by day. Jude knew that the believers were facing difficult situations in the world—a society focused on selfish pleasure, ready to persecute believers at any provocation, with false teachers looking to tear the churches apart. Mercy helps believers in their times of need (Hebrews 4:16). That believers would have mercy in abundance meant that they were secure in God's merciful call and protection.

2. Peace refers to the peace that Christ made between us and God through his death on the cross. Only God can give true and lasting peace. Jews wish each other "peace" (shalom in Hebrew). Peter referred to the peace of Christ (see 2 Peter 3:14). Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27 niv). The believers needed an abundance of inner peace and quiet confidence as they faced the turmoil in their world and as they stood up to the false teachers.

3. Love comes from God, for God himself is love (1 John 4:7–8). Believers who are grounded in God's love can resist the lies of the false teachers and remain solid in their stand against persecution and temptation. God will generously grant their requests and meet their needs.

LOVE

"All you need is love" announces the Beatles' classic tune. It's totally right, yet gives the wrong solution. The love of another person, even intimate and personal, may be satisfying for a time; in the long run, however, it will turn out to be insufficient for a person's deepest needs. The love of God, which fills the heart with peace and assures the soul of mercy, provides the framework for all other loves. Without it, human love fails. When Jude wanted to share abundant love for his readers, he urged them toward fullness, happiness, contentment, and generosity. God's love forgives, strengthens, and leads us. It gives all other loves a purpose and a hope. In what ways have you experienced God's abundant love? How will you love him in return?

3 Beloved, while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share, I find it necessary to write and appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Although Jude's brief letter does not mention his intended readers, it addresses specific concerns about false teaching that was threatening the churches. Yet that may not have been Jude's original intention. He probably decided to write to encourage believers. However, an urgent concern about false teaching caused him instead to write this letter denouncing the false teachers and appealing to the Christians to contend for the faith. Jude probably wanted this letter to be circulated because false teaching was a serious problem for all the churches. Thus, he specified no particular church or area.

The believers were addressed as beloved (also translated, "dear friends"), a term often used by those who wrote with authority to the Christians. (For example, Paul used the term in 1 Corinthians 10:14; Peter, in 1 Peter 2:11 and 2 Peter 3:1; John, in 1 John 2:7 and 3:2.) Jude had wanted to write a joyous letter to believers

about the salvation we share, that is, a letter about the Christian faith that he and all believers had in common. Instead, Jude had to set that idea aside because a much more urgent and unhappy topic needed to be addressed. False teachers were threatening the churches, endangering the believers' faith.

The word "contend," *epagonizesthai*, occurs only here in the New Testament. Often it is used in secular literature to describe the intense struggle in an athletic contest. Jude called the believers to action, to contend for the faith. "Contending" would not be easy; it called for hard work, diligent study, willingness to stand against society's desire to water down the gospel, speaking up for the truth and bearing the burden of interpreting the timeless truth to a changing society. The believers could not (and would never be able to) sit back and idly enjoy the mercy, peace, and love of their faith (v. 2). Rather, their Christian faith must be defended against the onslaught of false teaching. "The faith" refers to the entire body of beliefs taught by the apostles and held by the Christians (see Acts 2:42). The teachings of Christ and his apostles had been once for all (without change to the content) entrusted to the saints (to all believers). All Christians had been entrusted with the faith—to keep it pure and to teach it to others. Therefore, all Christians should stand ready to defend the faith as they would defend any prized possession.

Jude emphasized the important relationship between correct doctrine and true faith. The truth of the Bible must not be compromised because it gives us the real facts about Jesus and salvation. The Bible is inspired by God and should never be twisted or manipulated.

NO COMPROMISE

How do ordinary Christians contend for the truth today? Think about these ideas:

- It is every Christian's job to study the Bible. Don't ever imagine that pastors and seminary professors hold a monopoly on this task. Without study, you cannot know what to contend for.
- Knowledge in the brain is only part of contending for truth. Prayer is vital. God gives the Holy Spirit as a teacher. Unattached to God, you may know everything, but understand nothing.
- Many private interpretations fracture the truth of the gospel; Christians must remain unified on the essentials. Associate with a church that loves God and encourages learning. Then use your common resources for the hard work of contending. Lone crusaders invariably create hostile splinter groups.

There are certain doctrines that we should contend for, those that are central to our faith and salvation (such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, atonement). On others we can agree to disagree (such as Calvinism/Arminianism, charismatic issues, methods for spiritual growth, spiritual disciplines).

- Truth must be served as well as studied. Demonstrate the truth by working for it. Build a house, organize a fun night, start a food pantry, help with youth—all in the name of Christ, the Truth.

4 For certain intruders have stolen in among you. Jude explained the reason for his compulsion to write this letter of appeal: certain intruders (that is, false teachers) had entered the church, "stealing in" among the believers. How could this happen? These may have been traveling teachers who had come and had established themselves in communities and churches with the sole aim of perverting the Christian gospel. (For example, in Galatians 2:4, Paul talked about the Judaizers who had infiltrated Christian groups.) Their teaching didn't sound so "false" at first; it was subtle and easy to follow, so it had lulled some believers away from the truth. The false teachers knowingly sought to destroy the church from within, working in an underhanded manner to bring in their ideas. But their false teaching would only lead to judgment. Although these teachers introduced their

perverted teaching carefully, any deviation from the truth is no longer the truth. For example, many taught that Christians can do whatever they like without fear of God's punishment. This reflects a weak view of God's holiness and his justice. Peter explained it this way: "They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them" (2 Peter 2:1 niv). Both Peter and Jude used the same Greek word, meaning "to smuggle" or "to worm their way in." Thus these false teachers did not belong in the church and were no better than intruders among the believers.

People who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Source: 23

Standing on the Word of God and Faith in Jesus Christ

God's Word is living, powerful, and centered in Jesus Christ. The following reflection organizes key biblical teaching on the Word into clear categories, using the New International Version (NIV) throughout.

The Living and Incarnate Word: Jesus Christ

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1–5, 14).

To stand on God's Word is to stand on the Person of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word who fully reveals the Father. Faith in Him is the heart of trusting Scripture, for the Scriptures bear witness about Him. Scripture becomes the living Word when the Spirit uses it to communicate the truth and power of the cross of Christ.

The Transformative Power of the Word

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

This penetrating quality means Scripture does not merely inform—it exposes pretense, reshapes convictions, and transforms choices. It is the instrument by which God cuts through deception and brings us to the truth of the gospel.

Standing as Doers Who Abide in the Word

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says (James 1:21–22).

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31–32).

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful (Joshua 1:8).

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4).

Standing on the Word requires embedding it in the heart and letting it govern daily actions, not mere hearing.

The Authority, Permanence, and Purpose of the Word

So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you (1 Peter 1:23–25).

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away (Matthew 24:35).

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever (Isaiah 40:8).

Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him (Proverbs 30:5).

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll (Revelation 22:18–19).

The Word carries divine authority, never returns void, remains forever, and must not be added to or taken from. Jesus Himself solemnly warns against altering the words of prophecy He has given.

Practical Ways to Stand on the Word

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path (Psalm 119:105).

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you (Psalm 119:11).

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17).

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts (Colossians 3:16).

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ (Romans 10:17).

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it” (Luke 11:28).

We stand by receiving the Word with meekness, storing it, meditating on it, and wielding it as the Spirit’s sword in the life of faith.

In summary, we stand firmly on the living Word of God—which is both the written Scriptures and the Person of Jesus Christ. Through faith in Him, the Word accomplishes its saving, equipping, and transforming work in us. We receive it whole, neither adding to nor subtracting from it, as Jesus Himself commands.

Sources: 24-25

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Sermon Notes:

Good morning Everyone and Happy Sunday... Meg, My Father, and I want to Thank Everyone for their Prayers...

In case you didn't know My Uncle in Florida Passed Away... He was like another Father figure to me... I had the honor to Officiate his Funeral...

I also want to Thank Our Whole Church Staff for Stepping up to the Plate and Carrying the Load... And Thank you Dr House for Preaching an Awesome Word Last Sunday...

Today we are going to Start a New Sermon Series Titled: "Faith Under Fire"

Let me give you our AVC Connections...

YouTube, App, Facebook/Website, Text Alerts

[Let's Pray]

In this Series- Faith Under Fire we are going to dive into the Short yet Powerful Epistle of Jude...

Let me Give you some Background information to Jude to set the Stage... Lots in the APP

Jude was a Brother of Jesus Christ... The First Sentence in the Book gives it away...

PP Jude, a Servant of Jesus Christ and Brother of James... (Jude 1a)

Jude is also Listed in the Gospels as Jesus' Brother in Matthew 13:55 and mentioned in the Upper Room in Acts 1:14...

Interestingly... Jude like his Brother James didn't put his faith and trust in Jesus until after the Resurrection...

[See when your Brother is Crucified & then Raised to Life 3 Days later it Changes your Life]

Jude was Transformed by the Power of Jesus and went onto Preach as a Missionary and Write a Book we now have to this Day...

Dig into the APP for Much more Historical Information

Theologian Wilkenson & Boa say this about Jude:

"Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible, but it hits harder than almost anything else in the New Testament. It rips the mask off false teachers-showing who they really are, how they live, and why God will judge them-using vivid pictures from the Old Testament so no one can miss the point. At the same time, Jude calls ordinary believers to do two things: build up their faith in what is true and fight for the gospel that has been handed down to them. In just twenty-five verses, he warns the church that danger has already slipped in the door, and he urges God's people to stand firm before it is too late."

(Wilkinson Boa, Talk thru the Bible)

The Two Things we hear Jude say to us is this: PP Build up Your Faith & Fight for the Gospel

Let's hop into this Powerful Letter... PP Read Jude 1-2

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 a Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

We can't just Brush through this Short Greeting of Exhortation...

Jude says we are Called... That's Right... You are Called...

You don't have to be a Pastor or an Elder... You are a Christian...

You don't need a Theological Degree

We see this Calling Language all throughout the New Testament

Most Famously Apostle Paul says: PP And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Tattooed over thousands of people)

PP Ephesians 2:10 Says: For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Sometimes we get the Calling Confused and think we gotta quit our jobs and Become a Missionary...
No... Be a Missionary right where you are at...

[Flat Tire Story]

What is Jude telling us we have a Call to Do?

We all have a Supernatural Calling to Defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ...

Judes Greeting is even more Powerful than that...

PP He says: We are Loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ.” (Jude 1b)

This is the Same love God had for the Israelites in the O.T.

The Love is Far more than we May be able to Comprehend...

A Love from God who... Is our Defender, Our Protector, Our Provider... Who Watches over us...

A God who Never Slumbers or Sleeps... And a God who has our Backs...

We are Called to Rise up & Defend Truth (Gods Word)

Make No Mistake about it... Jude was Making a 911 Call to the Christian Churches...

I hate to Break the Bad News to you, but All Churches Out there are Not Christian...

Jude Boldly Says this: Jude 3

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. (*I wanted to talk about Jesus BUT we have to Defend Jesus)

The Greek Word “Contend” Literally Means: To Fight for... To Struggle on Behalf of... It is related to the Athletic or Military idea of a Contest or Struggle... It’s not a passive agreement... it is an Active Defense. Fight for the Faith in Christ Jesus...

This Does Not Mean... Punch someone in the Face... It doesn’t Mean Burn it Down... Nor does it mean to Kill or Hurt other People...

In Acts 4 the Disciples were Commanded (By Religious Leaders) to Stop talking about Jesus...They said NO

Jude 4 is the Wizard of Oz Reveal... It Exposes what’s going on behind the Curtain...

The Wizard Controlled the Emerald City Through- Deception, Influence & Intimidation

That’s what the World Attempts to use on us-

- #1 Deception- Smoke & Mirrors
- #2 Influence- We know more than you
- #3 Intimidation- Do what we say or else

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.

Christian Brothers & Sisters Our Faith is Under Fire and we must Defend it by Standing on God's Word...

PP Jesus said this in Revelation 22:12-18/ Read In Bible (Preach)

Friends... Scripture says in 2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

In Closing Let Me Remind You what Jude says:

PP "Build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit." Jude 20

Closing Prayer

Devotional Questions:

Faith Under Fire (Jude)

- 1. Read Jude 1–2.** Jude calls believers "called, loved by God the Father, and kept by Jesus Christ." Which of these three do you struggle to believe most, and how does this verse (or another passage like Romans 8:28 or Ephesians 2:10) speak to that struggle?
- 2. Read Acts 4:18–20 and Jude 3.** The disciples were told to stop speaking about Jesus and refused. What does it look like for you to "contend for the faith" in your current relationships or workplace without being harsh?
- 3. Read Jude 4.** False teachers had "secretly slipped in," turned grace into a license for sin, and denied Jesus as Lord. Where do you see these same distortions happening today, and how does this verse warn the church?
- 4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17.** Scripture is God-breathed and equips us for every good work. What is one specific area of your life where you need to let God's Word correct or train you right now instead of relying on your own thinking?
- 5. Read Jude 20.** Jude tells us to "build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit." What is one practical way you can build up your faith this week, and how does prayer in the Spirit fit into that?
- 6. Read Revelation 22:18–19 and Jude 3.** Both passages warn against adding to or taking away from what God has given. Why is it dangerous to alter the gospel, and how does this challenge the idea that "all churches are Christian"?
- 7. Read Ephesians 2:10 and Jude 1.** God has prepared good works for those He has called. Where has He already placed you as a "missionary" (work, neighborhood, family, school), and what is one step of obedience you sense Him leading you to take there?