

I need your help this morning. Tell me what you see? **Show pictures of buffets.**

Answer is **a buffet**. I love a good buffet. Seafood, Country, Chinese. It doesn't really matter. Waiting for a good BBQ buffet. I love three things about a buffet.

1) I get to see the food before I choose it. 2) I get to take all I want. 3) I get to pick and choose what I want (all meat) and reject what I don't want.

I'm afraid some believers **view God like a buffet**. They want to pick and choose characteristics of God they like and reject the things about God they don't like. We like that **God is love**, I'll take that. We learn that **God is merciful**. I'll take a plateful of that. **God brings peace**. Yep, I need some of that. **God judges**. Nope! **God disciplines**. I'll pass. God **calls me to do something hard**. Not a chance. God is not like that!

In a similar way we **view the Bible like a buffet**. I like what it says here, so I'll take that. I don't like what it says there, so I'll ignore it. All Scripture is inspired by God. All Scripture is profitable. All Scripture is relevant, even the parts that are hard. The message of Jude is not easy. It is challenging, convicting, and hard. But oh, so needed for us. While we may want to **fill our plate with John 3:16 and the 23rd Psalm**, we also need to healthy serving of messages like the one we find in Jude.

Some passages that call for action, faithfulness, perseverance, courage, and trust. Jude is one of those. It is not written to make you feel good, but to call you to action. It's on the buffet and we must not neglect it. We need a healthy serving. With that in mind, we're going to do a deep dive into this small but powerful letter hidden in the shadow on the book of Revelation.,

First century believers, the ones who received the original writings that became our New Testament, were immersed in a culture defined by theological confusion and moral corruption. Those of us who have lived more than five or six decades are often heard bemoaning the rapid acceleration of our culture into theological chaos and moral insanity. **To put it simply, the world has lost its collective mind!**

Jude wrote to call **the church to keep its mind**, or more importantly to keep the faith. Regardless of how turbulent the waves around us, we must stay calm, remain steady and live the truth. Regardless of the pressure to conform, we must stay resolute in our convictions. **There are times** when it is our duty to **defend the faith**. So, with that in mind, let's dive into this letter.

Jude warns of the danger of false teachers and of falling away from the true faith. **This is the theme of this letter**. As we will see, he felt compelled to be a defender of the faith and through this letter calls all believers to join him.

As J. Vernon McGee so ably put it, **Jude hangs out a red lantern on the most dangerous curve along the highway that the church is traveling. This little epistle is like a burglar alarm. Apostates have broken into the church. They came in the side door when nobody was watching.**

This is a fascinating letter. The only account of a confrontation between Satan and Michael over the body of Moses is found here. It refers to the prophecy of Enoch, something not found anywhere else in Scripture. Jude sees the Lord coming with ten thousands of His saints. It really provides a great introduction to the book of Revelation.

READ Jude 1:1-2. (The text provides a three-point outline)

1. The Writer

You can tell a lot about a man by how he describes himself. It is clear from Jude's self-description that he is a man very comfortable with playing second-fiddle. He is not a glory-seeker or one clamoring for high position or reputation. He simply wants his readers to know who is writing.

A. Jude

This is a form of the name *Judas* or *Judah*. It was a very common name in that day. In a group of 500 people, it is likely that there would be at least 3-4. There are six men by this name in the N.T. So, we must look to the other things which he wrote about himself to find out who he is.

B. Bondslave

Jude calls himself a bondslave of Jesus Christ. This is the word *Doulos*. This was a designation showing that He considered Jesus to be his Lord. It means master, owner. He was yielded to the will of the Lord. He had only one object in life: to be at the disposal of Jesus and his causes.

C. Brother of James

Matthew wrote, *Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? Are not his brothers James, Joses, and Simon, and Jude?*

Two of the brothers of Jesus were James & Jude. James wrote the book of James and was the pastor of the church in Jerusalem. Jude identifies himself as the brother of James. Therefore, he was also the half-brother of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 9:5, Paul points out that the brothers of the Lord were married and engaged in the work of the church.

Notice that Jude does not identify himself as the brother of the Lord. We must learn that through his association with James. James does a similar thing in his letter. This is a great testimony to the **humility of these** two half-brothers of our Lord. They were not using their position in his earthly family as leverage. Nor were they expecting some special privilege because of it. They both saw that their spiritual relationships with Christ took precedence over their family relationship with him.

The fact that these two men attested to the deity of Christ is great evidence of that truth. If anyone could dispel His claims of deity, it would be the two boys who grew up on the same home with him. **They do not.** Keep in mind that neither of them believed Jesus was Lord, until after his resurrection. That not only changed the world, but His brothers. It is the greatest evidence to the deity of Jesus available.

2. The Readers

A. Called - Word was used in three ways.

- 1) Used of summoning a person to office, duty or responsibility.
- 2) Used of summoning a person to a feast or festival.
- 3) Used of summoning a person to judgment. (court)

God has invited us to be a part of His family. He has initiated salvation for you and me. His idea. His plan. His work. His calling. You would not be saved if He had not called you.

B. Beloved

This is a warm expression, reminding us that we truly are loved by God. He doesn't simply tolerate us; He **delights in us**. He has chosen that we would bring him joy and pleasure through our relationship with Him.

C. Kept

This is a most important word in Jude's letter. Remember that he is **warning of apostasy**, which means "a falling away." Referring to those who would turn away from the faith and be lost forever. By using this word **kept** Jude is setting forth an important thing to remember. Those who are apostates never were **true** disciples of Christ, for a true disciple of Christ is kept or preserved by Christ Himself. The word means to guard from loss or injury. Used to described those who are **closely guarded**. **Wonderful assurance in Jesus Christ.**

Remember what Jesus said about this. *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me: and I give to them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* (John 10:27-29)

Your salvation is based upon the integrity of the Word of God. It says Jesus can and will keep you safe and saved. To doubt that is to doubt the God who wrote it.

Kenneth Wuest translates this verse: *Jude, a bondslave of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who by God the Father have been loved and are in a state of being the permanent objects of His love, and who for Jesus Christ have been guarded and are in a permanent state of being carefully watched, to those who are called ones.*

3. The Prayer

Jude then offers a prayer for his readers and for us. He prays that certain things would be multiplied for us. The word means **to be filled up to the brim and overflowing**. The three things that he prays will overflow in our lives are mercy, peace, and love.

A. Mercy

Mercy is God's love in action. It is God reaching down and forgiving our sins, even though we have not earned that forgiveness. It is God's forgiveness extended to the unworthy.

B. Peace

Peace is a benefit of mercy. Because He has been merciful to us, we have peace with Him and peace in our hearts. He fills the longing of our hearts. He calms our anxieties. His peace floods our sometimes-troubled souls and enables us to make it through the tough times.

C. Love

God's love is never-ending, unconditional, and completely sufficient.

This is God's never-ending, unconditional love. It is true love. Jude prays that this love will be multiplied to us. God's love cannot be increased. **But our awareness of it can be.** Jude is praying that we will feel His love.

As this love is **multiplied in you**, it will be **multiplied through you**. You will find a greater ability to love others! **Amy Carmichael** illustrates this wonderfully with the following words.

Recently I was sent a picture of a jug into which water was being poured.

The idea was that love is poured into us like that. I don't think of it so at all. I think of the love of God as a great river, pouring through us as the waters pour through our ravine in flood-time.

*Nothing can keep this love from pouring through us, except of course our own blocking of the water. Do you sometimes feel that you have got to the end of your love for someone who refuses and repulses you? Such a thought is folly, for one cannot come to the end of what one has not got. We have no store of love at all. **We are not jugs; we are riverbeds.***

-Amy Carmichael in "Whispers of His Power,"

Jude's message boils down to two primary things.

1) Defending the faith against false teaching and eroding culture.

Against the backdrop of an ever-declining culture we must be clear and direct in declaring what the truth. Make no mistake, false teaching are spouting deception and the culture is moral free-fall.

Think about how Christianity and Christ-followers have been viewed and how those views have changed in the last 50 years.

Considered good and positive. Therefore, it was respected and honored.

Considered irrelevant and unimportant. Therefore, it was ignored.

Considered a weakness. Therefore, it was ridiculed and mocked.

Considered dangerous and harmful. Therefore, it is attacked and cancelled.

Perfect illustration: One of the hosts of **The View** said she doesn't know the difference between Christians and the Taliban. She is either incredibly naïve or has a sinister agenda to destroy the Christian faith. I'm sure it is the latter.

We are called, commissioned, and empowered to be defenders of the faith. Don't shy away from it. Don't avoid it.

Jude also wrote to . . .

2) Warning against the danger of falling away from the faith.

With the swarm of false teaching and eroding morality, it would be easy to fall away from the truth.

Don't let that happen. Don't become a victim to the persuasive arguments of those who reject the truth and embrace a lie. Stand strong. Be resolute. Persevere.

Law professor and technology expert Tim Lu wrote an editorial in the NY Times a few years ago. The title was *The Tyranny of Convenience*.

He argues that as a culture we have become convenience-driven. We do things that are convenient, even when those things may not be what we think are best. Wu wrote of the danger of letting convenience drive us:

*With its promise of smooth, effortless efficiency, it threatens to erase the sort of struggles and challenges that help give meaning to life. Created to free us, it can become a constraint on what we are willing to do, and thus in a subtle way it can enslave us . . . **When we let convenience decide everything, we***

surrender too much.

Tim Wu, "The Tyranny of Convenience," The New York Times Sunday Review (2-16-18)

The message of Jude will not be convenient. But it is necessary.

In this generation, as it was in Jude's time, we need men and women, young and old, students and children to courageously know the truth, speak the truth and defend the truth. It is neither easy nor convenient. And so, we will be tempted to ignore it. Leave it on the buffet rather than adding it to our plates. We do this for our convenience but in doing so, we are jeopardizing the spiritual health of those around us who are desperate to find warriors who will speak the truth with courage, conviction and authority.

As Christ-followers, we must not let convenience decide everything for us. If we do, we have **surrendered too much**. Sometimes, to choose the convenient road is to choose against Christ. What will you do? What is your decision?