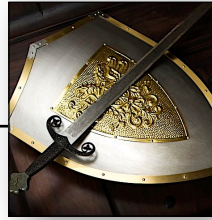


(Jude) - Defending the Gospel



- Do you ever feel confused about what to believe because there are so many opinions, philosophies, religions, and political viewpoints?
- How much exposure have you had to humanism, new age philosophy, world religions, or cults?

There is a battle going on in the world for the minds and souls of people. We are daily exposed to an unending variety of messages, beliefs, and opposing attitudes and values. A person's behavior and lifestyle are shaped by what he or she believes. We must be discerning and thinking people. We must have a reliable standard to evaluate what we hear and see. **The Bible, God's Word, is the ultimate authority for determining right from wrong, truth from error.**

The central message of the book of Jude is **a warning to Christians about deception creeping into their minds and church.** It is also about **defending the truth of the Bible** to make sure the message remains accurate.

Jude was intending to write an open joyful letter to the churches about their common experience of salvation. Instead, **he felt compelled to write to warn the church to defend the message of salvation.** Their church had been infiltrated by *"ungodly people"* who *"wormed their way into your churches"* (v. 4). They were causing trouble by (1.) teaching that *"grace"* allows them to *"live immoral lives"* (v. 4), and, (2.) *"they have denied"* Jesus Christ (v. 4).

Central Lesson:

Every Christian should **DEFEND** the **GOSPEL** in a world of deception and distortion.

Author: The author of the book is **JUDE**.

The author of the book refers to himself as *"a brother of James"* (v.1). The most well-known James of the early church was James, the half-brother of Jesus and the leader of the Jerusalem church. The name "Jude" is short for the Hebrew name "Judah" (Matt. 13:55). All of this indicates that Jude was also **a half-brother to Jesus**.

Jude, like his brothers, did not believe in Jesus during his earthly ministry (cf. John 7:5). Jude and his brothers saw Jesus crucified. They were spiritually transformed when they witnessed him alive after his resurrection. They subsequently became his followers (cf. Acts 1:14). Both James and Jude referred to themselves in the opening verses of their epistles as **servants of Jesus Christ** rather than as his half brothers in the flesh (cf. Jude 1 and James 1). This is strong evidence that **they recognized him as more than human, but as the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.**

Little is known about Jude as a Christian leader beyond the authorship of this letter. Also, little is known about the identification of his audience. They must have been Christians that Jude knew well as indicated by the use of his expression *"Dear friends"* in verse 3. His quotation of Jewish sources suggests that they were Jewish in their background.

Date: Jude was written around A.D. **65**.

Key Verse: Jude 1:3.

"Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people." NLT.

What did Jude mean by *"the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people"*? John MacArthur explained "...Jude is describing a fixed body of spiritual revelation that can be known as sound doctrine...used in discerning and sorting out truth from error (1 Thess. 5:20-22), and effective in confronting and attacking error... God's revelation was delivered once as a unit, at the completion of the Scripture, and is not to be edited by either deletion or addition (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19). Scripture is complete, sufficient, and finished; therefore it is fixed for all time. Nothing is to be added to the body of the inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21) because nothing else is needed." *The MacArthur Bible Handbook* (p. 516)

Key Word: DEFEND. Although the word is used only one time, it is nevertheless the key theme and keyword to this short book of one chapter.

Outline: *The Life Application Study Bible* outlines the book as:

- I. **The Danger of False Teachers (vs. 1-16).**
- II. **The Duty to Fight for God's Truth (vs. 17-25).**

Why Defend the Gospel from Distortion

1. The **SALVATION** of the lost depends upon it.
2. Our **MORALS**, values, & life priorities depend upon it.
3. Our **DECISION** making & everyday choices depend upon it.
4. **PROTECTING** ourselves & others from the error & deception of the cults, false religions, & new age teaching depends upon it.

Purpose: Jude's "To-Do" list concerning how to live in a corrupt world.

1. Defend the faith (v. 3).
2. Remember the warnings of the apostles about scoffers in the end times who cause division in the church (vs. 17-19).
3. Build yourselves up spiritually (v. 20).
4. Pray in the Holy Spirit (v. 20).
5. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the return of Christ (v. 21).
6. Be merciful to those who doubt (v. 22).
7. Snatch others from the fire and save them (v. 23).
8. Show mercy mixed with fear (v. 23).
9. Hate the corruption of the flesh--the sinful old nature (v. 23).

Central Lesson: Every Christian should defend the Gospel in a world of deception and distortion.

Will you look to the Bible, God's Revelation, as your ultimate authority for determining right from wrong, truth from error? Will you be a voice in today's world to defend the accuracy of the Gospel and the teachings of the Bible?

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.