

THROUGH THE BIBLE

JUDE 1

Last week we studied the Bible's two little letters - *2 and 3 John*. And I shared a Top Ten list, "[The World's Shortest Books.](#)" This week we're going back to the drawing board for another "[Top Ten Shortest Books...](#)"

10) "[Things I Love About The USA](#)" by Jane Fonda. 9) "[Out Of My Price Range](#)" by Bill Gates. 8) "[Favorite Recipes for Spotted Owl](#)" the EPA cookbook.

7) "[Things I did to deserve the Nobel Peace Prize](#)" by Barack Obama. 6) "[Profound Sayings](#)" by Joe Biden.

5) "[Gun Safety](#)" by Dick Cheney. 4) "[Motherhood](#)" by Britney Spears. 3) "[Things On Which I Am Not An Expert](#)" by Bill O'Reilly. 2) "[Morals and Ethics](#)" by Miley Cyrus. 1) "[Things I Love About Bill](#)" by Hillary Clinton.

Well, tonight we have one more short book of the Bible - 1 chapter, 25 verses...
The letter from Jude!

Verse 1, "[Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James...](#)" Two men named Jude are prominent in the Gospels - the Jude who was one of the original apostles - and Jude, the half-brother of our Lord Jesus. The latter Jude probably wrote this letter.

Recall in John 7:5, prior to Jesus' resurrection, even His brothers didn't believe in His true identity.

Jesus said to the people of Nazareth, “No prophet is accepted in his own country.” Familiarity often breeds contempt, and it did within Jesus’ own family.

But when they saw that their brother had conquered death, suddenly all their doubts were dispelled. All the evidence added up. They connected the dots. Yes, Jesus was who He said He was... *the Son of God*.

We learn in Acts 15 that another of Jesus’ brothers, James, had a leadership role in the Jerusalem church.

Here, Jude, identifies himself by his kin to James.

Isn’t this amazing, if Jude had been a name-dropper he could’ve introduced himself, “*brother of Messiah Jesus, the Son of God*” - instead it’s “*brother of James, bondservant of Jesus*.” It shows Jude’s humility.

More than a *sibling*, Jesus was His *Savior*. Rather than *bro*, Jude was His “*bondservant*,” or *love-slave*.

A bondservant was a special category of slave. After gaining his freedom, he continued to serve his master - *no longer out of obligation, but now out of love*.

We too are bound to the Lord Jesus. He holds claim to both heaven and earth. His Lordship demands our allegiance. We too are certainly the Master’s slaves.

But once you know Jesus - His grace, His mercy, His gentleness - *desire* replaces *duty*. We serve the Lord not just because we *have to*, but because we *want to!*

Jude writes, “*to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ...*”

God calls us to Himself...

He sets us aside for His purposes...

And He refuses to let anything snatch us away...

Watch this... "\$20 bill come to me!"... I'll sanctify it or put it in my wallet... then I'll pocket it to keep it safe.

In Christ we're **invited** and **reserved** and **protected**.

Jude finishes his greeting, **"Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you."** *Not just added, but multiplied.*

He continues, **"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation..."**

Initially, Jude's desire was to write of **"our common salvation"** - the blessings that we have in Christ Jesus.

But another urgent issue was pressing upon his heart. He tells them, **"I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."** A discourse on the facets of our salvation would've been a luxury. More pressing was **a defense of the faith.**

And here's why - **"For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."** Jude had encoun-

tered “*certain men... ungodly men*” - obviously false teachers - who were denying the truth about God and His grace.

2 Peter 2:1 warns, “*there will be false teachers among you.*” Jude saw that they were already there.

He exhorts his readers to fight for the truth!

According to a 2008 Pew Research survey among Christians in America we too need to be fighting the same battle. Faith is slipping. Orthodoxy is waning.

Did you know that today 52% - that’s over half of so-called “*Christian America*” - now believes that Christianity is NOT the only way to eternal life.

And when asked how one receives eternal life only 30% said “*faith alone.*” The same percentage, 29%, said it was by a person’s actions, and an additional 10% believed it was a combination of deeds and faith.

According to a 2011 Gallup Poll only one in three Americans believe the Bible should be taken literally.

Here’s also the results of a 2009 survey done by the Barna Research Group... Did you know only 34% of Americans believe moral truth is absolute, and unaffected by a person’s circumstances... Only 50% believe the Bible is accurate in all the principles it teaches... Just 27% believe Satan is real... And only 40% of Americans believe Jesus lived a sinless life...

Here’s how bad it’s gotten... Among Americans the most quoted “*Bible verse*” is... “*God helps those who help themselves.*” The problem... it’s not a verse at all!

It's a quote from Thomas Jefferson. Yet not long ago 82% of all Americans said it came from the Bible.

Here's my point, churches across America have done a poor job of "*contending for the faith.*"

Jude tells us to "*contend earnestly.*" The Greek word means "*to struggle.*" We should wrestle for the truth.

I'll never forget the tiny bit of wrestling I had to do in PE. My mat time was the longest 3 minutes of my life.

Wrestling is intense, grueling, exhausting. When the whistle blew I was drained - *totally spent.* This is the effort we should give the defense of God's Word.

And notice too, Jude tells us to contend for "*the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*"

God isn't adding new truth! The Scripture confirmed by Jesus, and that issued from the pen of His twelve apostles, is the truth given by God... "*once for all!*"

In fact, the Bible you hold in your hand is God's authoritative word for all time and for all mankind.

Years ago I read Billy Graham's autobiography, and in the final chapter he asks, "*Is it not arrogance or narrow-mindedness to claim that there is only one way of salvation or that the way we follow is the right way?*"

I think not... Do we consider it arrogant or narrow-minded when a doctor points us to the one medicine that will cure us of a particular disease? The human race is infected with the disease of sin - and God has given us the remedy. Dare we do anything less than urge people to apply that remedy to their lives?...

Dr. Graham concluded, "Over the last 60 years... I have crossed paths with people who hold every kind of religious and philosophical view imaginable. Often I am moved by their commitment. But, as the years have gone by, I have become even more convinced of the uniqueness and truth of the Gospel of Christ."

In his book Billy Graham goes on to explain the reasons he's so sure of the Gospel... *the authority of the Bible, the uniqueness of Jesus, the proof of His resurrection, the changed lives that result from its preaching...* We too need to be equally sure of God's truth - and relentless in its defense and declaration.

And not only do we need to contend for God's truth, but also His grace. The word "*lewdness*" denotes a license to do evil - *which is not the meaning of grace.*

God sets us free from the OT Law, not to act *lawlessly* - but to act in *love*. True liberty produces love for God and for others - not a license to serve myself.

On March 10, 1998 the Atlanta Constitution ran a news story entitled, "*Praying for a Successful Heist.*"

When I read it I couldn't believe it, "*According to a federal indictment in Des Moines, Iowa, Kenneth Ray Bruner led his seven accomplices in prayer asking for God's protection just before they set out to knock off Herman's Fine Jewelry...*" (*I'm not making this up!*)

“Bruner acknowledged, according to the indictment, *‘that they were going to do bad things but that they were not bad people.’* No one was hurt in the robbery, and everyone was behind bars the next day.”

And this is how people today think. They’re so blind to God’s truth they see no contradiction with being born again, knowing God, **and robbing banks** - *or sleeping with a boyfriend, or taking from the company, or fudging on your income tax, or cheating on a spouse.*

God’s grace frees us from condemnation so we can know God, and walk in His Spirit. But when His Spirit enters our spirit he changes us from the inside out.

If you say you’re a Christian, yet aren’t becoming more like Jesus there’s a problem - something’s wrong.

I ran across another set of disturbing stats which describe the similarities between people who say they’re Christians and folks who make no such claim.

“The survey reported 27% of non-Christians volunteered their time to a nonprofit organization last week - only 29% of born again Christians did likewise.

48% of non-Christians gave money to a nonprofit organization in the past month - less than that, 48% of born again Christians, gave an offering to their church.

49% of non-Christians tried to influence another person’s opinion last week - again less, 47% of born again Christians tried to do the same... 16% of non-Christians watched an X-rated movie in the last three months - whereas, 9% of born again Christians saw an X-rated movie in the last three months.” My point is there’s not as

much difference between the behavior of believers and unbelievers as there should be.

The phrase “*born again*” implies a change has taken place in my basic nature, and its working its way out.

If you’re truly *born again* you’ll be different than you once were... You’ll *love* instead of *hate*. You’ll *give* instead of *take*. You’ll *care* instead of *stare right past the need*. You’ll *obey God* instead of *go your own way*.

Jude continues, “**But I want to remind you, though you once knew this...**” Notice this letter was a reminder of what had already been written to these saints.

Compare the next few verses in Jude with 2 Peter 2, and you’ll be surprised by the similarities. Many Biblical scholars believe Jude actually borrowed from Peter.

It reminds me of a song released by pop singer, Mariah Carey. Her record soared to #2 on the charts.

She and her band had not planned on performing the song. It was added to her repertoire the night before a scheduled TV appearance. Someone suggested she sing an oldie. She chose a Jackson 5 tune, “*I’ll Be There*.” Her band learned it the night before the show.

The singer was shocked that a re-hashed song - at that time, 22 years-old - would become a hit single.

In a sense this is the letter of Jude. Perhaps it was a re-release of an old hit, 2 Peter 2. It reminded believers of info they already knew, but needed to take seriously.

Let me also say, don't anybody get bent out of shape that one Biblical author would borrow from another.

Here's a trade secret - it happens all the time with pastors... *we're not afraid to borrow from each other!*

*Did you hear about the guy who was preparing to teach a Bible Study - he said he was determined to be **original** or **nothing**. It turned out he was both!*

It's been said, "**Originality is the art of concealing your sources.**" Hey, all truth is God's truth - it originates with Him - and if something He gives me helps you live it or say it better - then use it to the glory of God.

You don't have to worry about quoting me. *(In fact, I probably borrowed it from someone else anyway.)*

In fact if you want to communicate something I say to someone else here's how you do it... The first time you quote me you say, "**As Sandy Adams once said...**"

The next time you say, "**As a man once said...**"

The third time you say, "**As I've always said...**"

Jude warns that false teachers will come, and those who are duped into following will share their judgment.

He illustrates this with several examples. The first are the Jews God delivered from Egypt. Verse 5, "**that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.**"

The Hebrews had a bad habit of listening to the wrong people. First, it was Edward G. Robinson - the little twerp in the movie who contradicted Moses...

Later they listened Korah... Still later they listened to the 10 doubting spies, rather than Joshua and Caleb...

They perished because they followed bad counsel.

Another example of those who shared the judgment of those who deceived them, (verse 6) were “the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day...”

Peter recounts this story in the context of Noah.

Jude’s phrase “who did not keep their proper domain” has been taken by some Bible teachers to mean there were fallen angels who crossed a God-imposed barrier to engaged in sex with mortal women.

Genesis 6 is offered as proof, “Now it came to pass... the sons of God (which is a biblical idiom for angels) saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be 120 years." (God was displeased.)

Genesis 6 continues, “There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.” That these unions created a race of “giants” - freaks - is evidence that the human gene pool had

been perverted. Thus, God took extraordinary measures to clean house and start over.

He destroyed all but eight people in a flood.

Realize this idea of sexual experiences with demons is not as bizarre a theme as you might think.

It appears in the occult. As well as in UFO literature. If you believe UFOs are demonic appearances, then what about sexual abductions? *Could it be another instance of fallen angels leaving their proper domain?*

This type of phenomena has even been portrayed in the movies. There's a scene in a 1985 movie "Cocoon" where a female alien gets too familiar with a human.

Jude's point is less provocative. There were angels created by God - they'd seen *the wonders of His glory, the beauty of His presence* - yet chose to rebel and go their own way. *Now Jude warns us not to do the same!*

Verse 7, "As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Ezekiel 16:49 makes it clear that homosexuality was only one of Sodom's sins.

Pride, idleness, greed, apathy all played a part in God's judgment of this city. Yet Jude is clear that sexual perversion was definitely on the list of its sins.

Homosexuality is abnormal. It's a deviation. It's not how God designed the sexes. *That makes it a sin.*

On the one hand, homosexuals need to be embraced with God's love - invited to turn from their sin and follow Jesus. On the other hand, homosexuality is evidence of folks hardening their heart to God's truth.

Jude's point though is that Sodom and its citizens had started out blessed. They had tremendous advantages, yet failed to honor God and obey His will.

Verse 8, **"Likewise also these dreamers..."** (Jude jumps back to the false teachers that had crept into the church) **"(they) defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries."** They had no decorum, or respect for spiritual authority. They were arrogant, haughty, and pretentious. They had no fear of God.

"Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves." These heretics of Jude's day had no sense of spiritual proportion. The dignitaries they spoke evil of extended even into the spiritual realm.

It reminds me of today's bombastic preachers that shout vile epithets at the devil and his demons.

Don't misunderstand, I'm no fan of the devil. I'd never say a nice word about him, but neither am I arrogant enough to call him out, and pick a fight.

The devil, though soiled and sinful, is an angelic being, and he's powerful. In Christ he's no match for me, but on my own I know I'm no match for him.

That's why Michael, though an archangel - an angel with some rank and muscle - didn't shout vicious threats. Rather he resisted Satan in a humble manner.

Michael made sure he put Jesus between he and the devil. He showed respect for spiritual realities and the power of his enemy. He said, "**The Lord rebuke you!**"

We should never live in fear of the devil. Greater is Jesus who is in us, than he who is in the world.

James 4:7 assures us, "**Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**" But that doesn't give us the right to act arrogantly as if we ourselves could take on the devil.

Whenever you encounter the devil always keep the Lord Jesus between you and him. Like Michael, "**The Lord rebuke you!**" is the appropriate response.

Verse 11, "**Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.**"

Jude gives us three more examples that warn us not to fall away from God's truth. And realize all three people started in a good place, yet wandered away...

The way of Cain was anger. He was mad his brother's sacrifice was accepted and not his own.

The error of Balaam was greed. He went divining for dollars. He agreed to curse God's people for a fee.

The rebellion of Korah was jealousy. He couldn't stand it that God's hand was on Moses and not him.

Do your best to avoid **anger, greed, and jealousy.**

Verse 12, “**These are spots...**” The Greek word used is that of an underwater reef. If a captain doesn’t steer around the reef he can sink his ship, and if we don’t avoid anger, greed, and jealousy we can sink a church.

To complete the thought - for these are spots “**in your love feasts...**” The love feast was the church’s weekly pot-luck. It was a community meal where the poor were fed. Believers were refreshed. Everyone enjoyed beautiful fellowship - it all culminating with communion.

And yet there were attitudes embodied in these false teachers that spoiled and tarnished even a love feast.

For “**while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves.**” Anger, greed, and jealousy all are weeds that grow from the same root - *from selfishness*.

These false teachers were only concerned about themselves, not the church at large - and it was apparent in how they acted during the love feast.

They clamored for attention rather than ministering to others. They’d scarf up the food rather than be first to share. There had no restraint - no fear of God.

“**They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds...**” You see clouds and hope for rain. A cloud speaks of promise. Yet these false teachers were *clouds without water*. They promised blessing, but the only person blessed by their ministry was themselves.

They're "late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots..." They had multiple chances to bear fruit - yet ended up barren. Despite second and third chances these men never failed to disappoint.

Verse 13, "raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame..." There's false teachers produced waves of ministry motion - whitecaps of activity - but nothing much of eternal value was actually accomplished. You could say **their ministry was all foam and no fruit!**

They were like "wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Jude saves the best and most vivid description for last.

These false teachers were like shooting stars that dart across the sky. They flash against the heavens for a moment - a second - but end up sailing into oblivion.

Once a woman who went on a new diet - all garlic.

Every morning she ate a garlic sandwich. At noon it was garlic for lunch. *Garlic-y* food for dinner as well.

In the end the woman didn't lose any weight, but people said she looked a lot smaller from a distance.

That was Jude's take on these false teachers. They looked good - had style - but they lacked spiritual character. They were *all show*, and *no substance*. They might've looked good at a distance, but not deep down.

Jude says in verse 14, "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to

execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” This blows my mind. Look at how Enoch is identified. He’s “*the seventh from Adam.*” That dates a guy. You lived a long, long time ago if your generation was shouting distance from Adam. *But what did ancient Enoch preach?* This is what amazes me...

He preached the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

He warned the world that one day Jesus will appear with His saints and vent God’s wrath on the wicked.

Jude continues his seething attack on the false teachers, “**These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage...**”

Rather than tell you what God says – they tell you what you want to hear! They flatter their hearers with falsehood rather than challenge them with God’s truth.

Their goal is to gain support for themselves and their ministry - instead of bringing salvation to their hearers.

One year I received a card that read, “**Thank you for teaching God’s Word and not a lot of other stuff.**” I hope that’s still true. *God’s Word is our great need!*

Verse 17, “**But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual**

persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.” Again, Jude reminds his readers that they have been warned...

Jesus Himself and the apostles predicted insincere people would infiltrate the church to pad their pockets.

Men who are more *sensual* than *spiritual* - more *lustful* than *loving*. These false teachers are more *out for themselves* than *out for God*. They're more attune to their *physical appetites* than to a *spiritual hunger*.

And under this kind of self-centered, self-absorbed leadership the church only fractures and splinters.

All too often cracks in the church are caused by the carnality of its leaders. Godly, unselfish, servant-hearted leadership is what binds a church together.

When leaders are setting the pace - and submitting to God and each other - and are following biblical wisdom - the people follow suit and remain united.

Jude encourages them, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Here is the key to victorious Christian living - “Stay under the spout where the blessings come out!”

This is Jude 20-21 in a nutshell - “keep yourself in the love of God” - “stay under the spout where the blessings come out.” God’s love is ceaseless! It’s always pouring showers of blessing... so don’t you put up an umbrella. Keep yourself in the blessing place!

And here's how... Jude gives us three guidelines...

First, *“building yourselves up on your most holy faith.”* Second, *“praying in the Holy Spirit.”* And third, *“looking for the mercy of our Lord unto eternal life.”*

Here's how you stay in the love of God...

Add some spiritual muscle to your faith by studying and applying God's Word. Romans 10:17 tells us, *“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word...”*

Depend on the Holy Spirit's inspiration and guidance. Perhaps God wants you to praise Him with the gift of tongues. He'll provide. Don't shy away or be inhibited. When it comes to prayer seek whatever spiritual advantage He may give you... Pray in the Holy Spirit.

And live today in light of eternity! Look for *“the mercy of our Lord”* - the great escape - the rapture. The Bible promises before judgment falls the church will rise. We'll be caught together to live forever with Jesus!

This is how you keep yourself in the love of God... *build your faith - pray in the Spirit - look for His mercy.*

Verse 22, *“And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.”* Here Jude lays out **two types of evangelism.**

There're folks who hear about the love of Jesus and immediately want to follow. They're drawn by God's love. It's Romans 2:4, *“do you despise the riches of His*

goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

Some people are led to Christ by the sweet-smelling fragrance of love - *but for others it takes the sulphur-smell of burning flesh rising from the flames of hell.*

G. Campbell Morgan once said, “I admit that I have seen a far larger number surrender to Christ when I’ve been preaching on the terrible results of neglecting salvation than when dwelling on any other theme.”

It reminds me of the New York cabbie, and the pastor. Both died and went to heaven at the same time.

They were in the lobby when an angel walked in and took the taxi cab driver on a grand tour of heaven. The pastor had to wait. He was ticked off. Why did he have to wait, while a cab driver gets special attention.

Finally, the angel came to usher him in. The pastor couldn’t help it. He had to ask, “I’ve loved people all these years and I’ve faithfully taught God’s Word. Why was that cabbie given special treatment over me?”

The angel replied, “You comforted folks, but that New York cab driver scared the hell out of them.” That’s idea here. There are people so lodged in sin it takes some good old-fashioned fear to shake them up!

Jude closes in verse 24 with a song of praise - a doxology. “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”

Here's a wonderful refrain - *worth our examination...*

“Now to Him who is able...” One of the fascinating studies in the Bible is to note all that God is able to do.

Daniel 3:17 Shadrach, Mesech, and Abednego tells the King that God is able to deliver them from the fiery furnace... In **Matthew 3:9** John the Baptist says that God is able to make children of Abraham out of Galilean rocks – *daughters and sons* out of *stones*...

Romans 4:21 says God is able to perform what He's promised... **Ephesians 3:20** states God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

2 Corinthians 9:8 says if we give to God, He is able to make His blessing abound to us... **Hebrews 2:18** assures us God is able to help us when we're tempted... **Hebrews 7:25** promises us God is able to save to the uttermost those who come to Christ...

The story of the Bible is that **God is able!**

And Jude adds to the list of marvelous things that God is able to do. He says in verse 24, God **“is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”**

I see folks who come to Christ that are so fragile. They're hanging on by a thread. They come in desperation, and weep, and ask for His forgiveness.

Yes, they leave happier, smiling - there's a bounce in their step - a song in their heart. Yet you know they're going home to the same problems they left behind when

they came to church - the same burdens that got them searching still exist. Tomorrow they'll face the same temptations that brought them here today.

Is there any hope these new believers - just babes in Christ - will they still be walking with Jesus next week? Or will they get sucked right back up into a web of sin?

Why do we have any confidence at all that you or me will still be living for Jesus next week - or the week after - or in the following years and decades to come?

It's because **God is able to keep us from stumbling!**

If we hold onto to Jesus we'll make it through the tough spots and down the rocky roads - we'll survive the slip ups and stumbles, and arrive at God's throne!

As Jude says, *"God is able to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!"*

I know that I'm not able. Hopefully, you know that you're not able. *But God is able!* And my faith is in His abilities, not my own! God is able! *Say it with me...*