

THE BOOK OF  
**JUDE**





# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JUDE

The writer of the book is identified as Jude, the brother of James and the half brother of Jesus (vs.1). The book is addressed to *“Jewish-Christians”* as the content has constant references to both the Old Testament and other Jewish literature. Since Jude is not mentioned as a leader within the Acts of the Apostles, it was quite natural for him to identify himself through his brother James, a leader in the church. Both Mark and Matthew tell us in their Gospels that Jesus had brothers by the names of Judas (aka Jude) and James (Mark 6:3; Matthew 13:15).

The focus of Jude’s letter is to encourage and affirm believers in Christ to build up their faith and warn them of potential dangers. Scripture refers to this wonderful ministry as edification. Within the context of edification, he also warned them specifically against false teachers whose instruction would lead them astray.



The Epistle of Jude is the fifth shortest book of the Bible. It contains just one chapter with 25 verses. (The Epistle to Philemon also contains 25 verses, while the 21-verse Book of Obadiah, the 14-verse 3 John, and the 13-verse 2 John are shorter.)

# THE BIG IDEAS OF THE BOOK OF JUDE

Jude is concerned about the people's spiritual well-being and, worried that they may be misled by false teachers or deviate from the right path. He prays that they will instead take the initiative and contend for the faith instead.

**Jude 1:3**, *"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people."*

## Drifting Away from Faith

Following Christ, growing in affection for Him and the Words of God - require staying intentionally focused on the things of God without allowing the lesser things of this world to control one's heart. A very familiar exhortation is given in Hebrews 2:1, *"Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."*

*What are the things that can make us drift away?*

### 1. *Danger of compromise*

As we fixate on the things of this world over and above the reign of Christ in our lives, compromise becomes a mundane practice. Small compromises of time and resources can grow

into larger ones regarding the teaching and application of the Word to our lives. This can ultimately result in a faith that is more about humanized spirituality with a sprinkling of Christian jargon, than true Christianity. So, let's watch out and refrain from compromising God's Word.

## *2. Nominal Christianity*

Nominal Christianity has always been the enemy of the church. Jesus warned against the nominal kind of spiritual lifestyle when He quoted Isaiah, *"This people honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me"* (Mark 7:6; Is. 29:13). Jude understood that principle and was deeply concerned with encouraging believers to avoid the satanic trap of becoming merely nominal Christians. Jude believed that the best defense against nominal Christianity was a strong and dynamic faith in Jesus Christ. We need to contend earnestly for our faith (v. 3).

## ***Dealing with False Teachings***

At its heart, false teaching arises when people allow their natural inclinations to overshadow the work of the Spirit. They seek to find room to express their ungodly desires, and therefore develop teachings that give room for that immoral lifestyle. Over and over again, church history has shown that however sophisticated the false teaching may sound, at its root is a basic desire to make more room for sinful indulgence.

Jude's main purpose in writing this epistle was to warn the church about the presence and dangers of false teachers. He



describes the character of these ungodly teachers while exposing their false teachings. Jude is trying to show that their moral compromise is an indicator of bad theology.

Jude emphasizes that the primary goal of false teachers is to disrupt the unity of the body of Christ and destroy the faith of believers. He wants the church to know that the appearance of these teachers is not a surprise. He transitions into a longer warning that urges people to stay away from false teachers. Jude's message is very clear: avoid these teachers and respect God's commands!



# CHAPTER SUMMARY

Jude has only **one chapter** and 25 verses. These 25 verses can be categorized into three parts.

## Jude 1:1-3

### Contend for Your Faith

#### Jude 1:3

*"... I urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people."*

## Jude 1:4-19

### Don't be a Destroyer

#### Jude 1:18-19

*"In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires."  
These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.*

## Jude 1:20-25

### Be a Builder

#### Jude 1:20

*"But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit..."*

# JUDE 1:1-3

## CONTEND FOR YOUR FAITH

Jude states that the initial purpose for writing his letter was to focus on the topic of their *"common salvation,"* but certain circumstances caused him to change his mind and write this short letter about contending for the faith. To contend for the faith means to *defend, fight, wrestle, struggle, or make a strenuous, laboured effort* for the truth of God's word and the Apostles' teachings on which the church was built.

### *Now why should we contend for the faith?*

Because, according to verse 4, false teachers have crept into the Christian community - and are perverting the grace of God and denying the authority of Jesus. **A false belief system ultimately creates enmity against God.** Many times, the ideals and culture of this world are in opposition with Biblical Christianity. Contending for the faith requires that we have correct knowledge and understanding of Scripture. We must be able to correctly interpret and use the Bible in order to *"give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have"* - 1 Peter 3:15.





Please note that this word *“faith”* usually refers to that act of the heart by which we put our trust in Jesus Christ as our only hope in life and death. **But in the book of Jude *“faith”* refers not to the *“act”* of believing, but rather to *“what”* is believed.** The New Testament speaks of the basic truth of what God had done in Christ as *“tradition.”* This suggests that even in the first century, there was already a recognized body of teaching that all Christians were expected to embrace. Paul uses the same verb as Jude uses here to talk about his role in *“handing down”* that tradition (1 Cor. 15:1–5).

So, Jude urges Christians to contend for *“the faith”* and assume they know what he’s talking about.

Unlike some modern sceptics, Jude doesn’t speak of multiple *“Christianities.”* Like Paul, he believes that there is only *“one faith”* (Eph. 4:5), and and he strongly defends against false gospels (Gal. 1:6–9). Paul makes similar references to this tradition (using other language) in 1 Timothy 1:10; 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1. Similarly, **Jude claims to stand in a line of true teaching about Christ and His significance.**



# JUDE 1:4-19

## DON'T BE A DESTROYER

In this long discourse, Jude warns against the false teachers who would seek to destroy the faith of believers rather than to build it. These destructive men have crept into the church unnoticed and *“have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”* (vs.4)

This whole section can be divided into two categories. The first exposes the characteristics of these ungodly men who are false teachers and the distinctives of their false teaching. The second exposes the judgments God is going to bring upon them and all who follow their evil ways.

### A. The characteristics of these false teachers and their false teaching

1. They are *“ungodly”* men (vs.4). To be ungodly is to act in a way that is contrary to the nature of God, to actively oppose God in disobedience, or to have an irreverent disregard for God. The Bible often speaks of *“the flesh”* in reference to things that emanate from our sinful natures. The acts of the flesh and the desires of the world fall under the category of ungodliness.

2. They *“turn the grace of God into a license for immorality”* (vs.4). The *“grace”* (*cháris*) of God is very

expensive. It has been bought with the very blood of Jesus Christ. His grace has been bestowed upon us so that we will live the godly life of righteousness. But those who walk in sin would encourage us to misuse this grace as a license to live a life of immorality.

3. They ***“deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (vs.4). The litmus test of authentic Christianity is the lordship of Jesus Christ. No one can truly belong to Him without acknowledging Jesus as Lord and becoming a disciple of Him as we come under His authority.

4. They ***“defile their own bodies based on the strength of their own dreams”*** (vs.8). Jude calls these false teachers *‘dreamers of the flesh,’* instead of walking in the Spirit they dream in the flesh and pollute their own bodies. What a contrast to the biblical teaching that our bodies are precious in the sight of God and are actually temples of the *“Holy Spirit”*.

5. They ***“reject authority”*** (vs.8). They don’t like any authority, including God’s authority over their lives. So, they reject every authority, including godly leaders of the church, whom God has appointed.

6. They ***“heap abuse on celestial beings”*** (vs.8). Because they reject authority, they take the freedom to insult everyone, including the angelic beings. *Slander is primarily an act of self-exaltation by abusively speaking down on creatures above oneself.* So, Jude is trying to show that these false teachers were



were placing themselves equal to God's authority and above all these angels. In a sense, Jude was warning the church that these false teachers were indeed the real anti-christs of their age.

Jude warns by bring up a curious story from an extra Jewish literature to prove his point. Apparently, after the death of Moses, an argument took place between Michael the archangel and the Devil over the dead body of Moses. But, instead of abusing and slandering the Devil, Michael the archangel stopped him only by saying *"The Lord rebuke you."* (vs.9)

Jude is showing this as an example of submitting to God's authority and honouring what God has created and allowed. *Jude's point is that if a holy angel restrained himself from committing slander against an unholy angel, how much more we, being God's children, keep our tongue from slander.*

(Note: We are empowered to confront and expel the evil spirits in the name of Jesus, but not to engage in name-calling or slander against those who are influenced by darkness).

7. **They "speak evil of whatever they do not know"** (vs.10). In other words, it is a trait of a natural, sinful person to speak most loudly and emphatically about that which he or she knows little or nothing. That, says Jude, is true about false teachers. And they not only speak with loudness, but also, with evil.

8. **They are "like irrational animals"** (vs.10). Jude is comparing these false teachers to irrational or dumb animals who destroy themselves. The warning is explicit: avoid the treachery of false teachers.

9. They are like *“shepherds who feed only themselves”* (vs.12). These false teachers care only for themselves, not for the people.

10. They are like *“clouds without rain, blown along by the wind”* (vs.12). The inference is clear. Clouds without rain are like wells without water - they are of little use. They are driven by the wind, - out of control. See Proverbs 25:14: *“Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give.”*

11. They are like *“autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead”* (vs.12). A tree without fruit has not fulfilled its purpose. Twice dead refers to being dead in sin by our first nature and afterwards losing grace through false teachings (apostasy) to a point of no return. That is why Jude says, they are plucked up by

### Is once saved, always saved?

It's both a 'Yes' and a 'No' answer.

Yes, when people come to know Christ as their Savior, they are brought into a relationship with God that guarantees their salvation as eternally secure. Eternal security is a glorious and comforting truth. We do not have to live in fear because our God is able to *“keep you from falling”* and we are secure in Him.

On the other hand, eternal security is not a license to sin. The Bible makes it clear that a true Christian will not live *“any way he wants to.”* Christians are new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). Christians demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), not the acts of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). Grace is given so we can be transformed to be more like Jesus.

The answer turns out to be a “No” when Paul reminds us in Romans 11 that *“Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though a wild olive branch, were grafted in among them and have come to share in the rich root of the cultivated olive tree, do not boast that you are better than those branches ... they were broken off because of unbelief, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but beware, because if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.”*

So having a faith that *“endures to the end”* is evidence that you possess the salvation that cannot be lost.



the roots, as they no longer draw nourishment from Jesus Christ (John 15).

12. They are like ***“wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame”*** (vs.13). Jude is comparing these false teachers to wicked people described by Isaiah 57:20: *“But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud.”*

13. They are like ***“wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever”*** (vs.13). These false teachers are like the stars that have gone astray or have moved out of their intended orbit. This statement reveals one of the great tragedies of the life of sin. It always takes us off course from enjoying the very best that God has prepared for us.

14. These ***“people are grumblers and faultfinders...”*** (vs.16). Those out of fellowship with the living God, who have strayed from their intended orbit, are *“complainers”* rather than *“praisers.”* This language occurs regularly in the Old Testament to depict the Israelites who grumbled against God for bringing them out of Egypt into the barren desert (Exodus 16). So, Jude implies that the false teachers are also grumbling against God.

15. They ***“follow their own ungodly desires”*** (vs.16 & 18). Twice Jude describes the false teachers as those who follow their own lusts. Peter begs his readers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11). Unfortunately, these teachers do not warn against such conduct; they practice it in their own lives.

16. They **“boast about themselves”** (vs.16). At the heart of someone who boasts is the desire to have others esteem them in a certain way. They are people who have a desire to be seen by others in the same light that they perceive themselves. A boaster will commonly draw attention to their own achievements at the precise moment that someone else achieves something. False teachers are loud mouth boasters, according to Jude.

17. They **“flatter others for their own advantage”** (vs.16). Flattery is a form of lying since it is exaggerated or distorted truth. Evil people use it to deceive others for their own advantage.

18. They are **“scoffers”** (vs.18). In the Bible, scoffers are those who choose to

### **Incurvatus in se**

It's a Latin theological phrase that describes all human beings as selfish, distorted and *“curved inward on oneself.”* Because of the effects of sin, we do not have the propensity to live a life for God and for others.

Martin Luther in his exposition of Romans writes: *“Our nature, by the corruption of the first sin, is so deeply curved in on itself that it not only bends the best gifts of God towards itself and enjoys them or rather even uses God Himself in order to attain these gifts, but it also fails to realize that it so wickedly, curvedly, and viciously seeks all things, even God, for its own sake.”*

Romans 7:15-18,19, *“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”*

By nature, we are stubbornly determined to sit on the throne of our lives. Even after we are saved, by grace through faith, and received our new nature, we still must consciously surrender our self-worship and self-importance to Jesus every day so that He can take His rightful place in our lives. The cure for *‘incurvatus in se’* is to turn our focus daily towards Christ and the people God has put in our lives with the help of the Holy Spirit.

disbelieve God and His Word. We cannot totally escape the presence of scoffers. They were active in Jesus' day, and we continue to live among them today. We know from Scripture that scoffing will only increase as we near the time of Jesus' return (2 Peter 3:3).

19. **They "divide you"** (vs.19). The Spirit of God brings unity to members of the body of Christ. But those who walk according to their own ungodly lusts are the ones who cause divisions or separations within the body.

20. **They "follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit"** (vs.19). Paul teaches, *"The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (1 Cor.2:14) So the basic problem of these false teachers is the absence of the Holy Spirit. They do carry some spirit but not the Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of truth. Jesus says, *"When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth"* (John 16:13).

## **B. The judgements which will surely come upon these false teachers**

After exposing the characteristics of these false teachers, Jude speaks very specifically about the judgments that will come upon those who walk according to their own ungodly lusts and seek to lead others astray.



### 1. *The Lord destroyed the Israelites who did not believe*

(vs.5) The generation God rescued from Egypt doubted God's power and promise in the desert. They were therefore sentenced to die in that desert and did not enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14).

### 2. *"And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority... these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great day."*

(vs.6) Jude points out that if angels who were disobedient were judged, then these false teachers have no excuse.

### 3. *They will suffer the punishment of eternal fire*

(vs.7). Jude now uses the historical example of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities that had given themselves to sexual

## Importance of Hell

There are plenty of people today who don't believe in the Bible's teaching on everlasting punishment or hell.

Jesus spoke more about hell than all other authors in the Bible. Jesus speaks of "*eternal fire and punishment*" as the final abode of the angels and human beings who have rejected God (Matthew 25:41,46). He says that those who give in to sin will be in danger of the "*fire of hell*" (Matthew 5:22; 18:8-9).

If Jesus, the Lord of Love and Author of Grace spoke about hell more often, and in a more vivid, blood-curdling manner than anyone else, it must be a crucial truth.

In Matthew 10:28, Jesus says, "*Do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*" He was speaking to His disciples, some of whom would eventually be tortured, sawn in half, flogged and burned alive. Yet, he says, that is a picnic compared to hell. Clearly, for Jesus, hell was a real place, and especially after the judgment day, people would experience it in their bodies. Hell is a place not only of physical but also of spiritual misery.

Interestingly, hell is simply one's independently chosen path going on forever. We wanted to get away from God, and God, in His infinite justice and mercy, sends us where we want to go.

immorality. Their destruction by fire is an example and warning to these false teachers who seek sexual immorality.

4. *Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion* (vs.11). Jude is declaring woe upon those who speak evil about things they don't understand, who think only in the natural realm, and who literally corrupt themselves (vs.10).

He uses three Old Testament examples to reveal three specific sins of the false teachers. First, there is **Cain** who failed to please God because he murdered his brother (Gen. 4:1–15). Next, there is **Balaam** who not only sinned by his deceit and covetousness, but also attempted to lead the children of Israel astray (Numbers 22–24). Finally, there was **Korah** who rebelled against the authority and leadership of Moses—an authority appointed by God (Num. 16:1–36). God's judgment came upon Cain, Balaam, and Korah when they disobeyed, and His judgment will surely come upon all who disobey in the present day.

5. *"The Lord comes ... to execute judgment on all ... who are ungodly"* (vs. 14, 15). Jude is again quoting from Jewish literature called the book of Enoch. The prophecy in the book of Enoch is *"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.”* Jude is not referring to it as Scripture, but rather as a common source with which his Jewish readers would be very familiar.

The message of Jude concerning the impending judgment of God upon the false teachers is loud and clear. The judgment of God will certainly fall upon them. Peter, John, and Paul predicted that corrupt teachers would arise and distort the good news, denying Jesus by their actions (1 John 4:1-3, 2 Timothy 3:1-9, 2 Peter 2:1-3). And they were echoing Jesus’ earlier warning about the same issue (Matthew 7:15-19). With all these examples, hopefully this church won’t need any more convincing that these false teachers have to be dealt with.



# JUDE 1:20-25

## BE A BUILDER

Our Lord has called us to be builders—not destroyers. Sin brings destruction, but spiritual life brings growth! After condemning the false teachers who would destroy and tear down, Jude instructs us to build ourselves up spiritually (v. 20). We are to be builders! And Jude shares six specific ways we may accomplish this:

1. *“But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith”* (vs.20). Faith is a vital essential to the life of spiritual growth. Hebrews declares that *“without faith it is impossible to please [God]”* (Heb. 11:6). The most holy faith is the foundation of our spiritual life, the belief in the saving work of Jesus Christ accomplished through His death and resurrection. It is distinct in living out your life in obedience to God.

2. *“Praying in the Holy Spirit”* (vs.20). Jude encourages us as builders to be those who would be praying in the Holy Spirit. Prayer is not something we ask God alone, but in communion with the Holy Spirit and guided by Him. Prayer is spiritual, and the Holy Spirit desires to empower us to pray; He wants to make intercession for us according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).

3. *“Keep yourselves in God’s love”* (vs.21). If we are to be

builders, we must also be lovers. And that love must flow from God Himself. Jude reminds the words of Jesus, *“if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love”* (John 15:10). Stay within the bounds of God’s love. Don’t stray away like a star out of orbit. Enjoy the love of God and share it freely with others.

4. ***“Wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (vs.21). The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be enjoyed day after day. But Jude reminds us of the ultimate mercy of God—eternal life. We are to wait or look forward to that gift of His mercy. When our eyes are set on that goal, and we enjoy the daily mercies of God, we become unsusceptible to false teachers.

5. ***“Be merciful to those who doubt”*** (vs.22). We should not only experience God's mercy ourselves but also share it joyfully with others. Jude states that we should make a distinction by sharing that mercy with those who have gone astray through the influence of false teachers. Our deepest concern should not be to condemn them but to restore them to the fellowship of Christ and His church.

6. ***“By saving others with fear”*** (vs.23). Jude reminds them that we shouldn’t be casual in the way we try to save people from their errors. It should be done with fear lest we may be tempted too (Galatians 6:1). It should be done with love and compassion for the sinner but with great hatred for the sin. We are to be like Jesus. He had a reputation for being a friend of sinners, but He hated sin.

The closing verses of Jude's short letter are the best known and most quoted of the entire epistle. It is the final word on Christian living and escaping the error of false teaching. The focus is squarely upon God! He is the One *"who is able to keep you from stumbling,"* and He is the One who will *"present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy"* (vs. 24). Our trust should be in Him alone.

Jude closes with the highest tribute to God as a reminder to us of who God is and who we are. *"To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."* (vs.25)

## CONCLUSION

We live in a unique time in history and this short book can help equip us for the untold challenges of living in the end times. Today's Christian must be on guard against false doctrines, which can so easily deceive us if we are not well-versed in the Word. We need to know the Gospel—to protect and defend it—and accept the Lordship of Christ, which is evidenced by a life-change. Authentic faith always reflects Christ-like behaviour. We need that personal relationship with Him; only then will we know His voice so well that we will follow no other.







**BETHEL AG CHURCH INTERNATIONAL  
WORSHIP CENTRE**

#67 RING ROAD HEBBAL, BANGALORE 560024

24/7 PRAYER LINE: 080-67537777 | [WWW.BETHEL.AG.IN](http://WWW.BETHEL.AG.IN)