

Abide in Me

John 15:4
*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



Volume 9 - Number 16

The Week of February 25, 2024

Contending for the Faith
The Danger Within
Jude 3-4

On February 18th we began a six-week series in the book of Jude. Jude is the penultimate book of the NT, located as it is at the threshold of the book of Revelation. In its brief 25 verses, Jude tells us what matters most and what matters most is always worth contending for. This edition of the *Abide* will look back at the introductory message which covered verses 1-2. It also includes the message last Sunday covering verses 3-4.

OBSERVATION (*What does the passage say?*)

Before meeting with your Growth Group, read through the passage at least twice and perform the following prompts:

- Underline the word servant (v. 1) and write above it the word *doulos*.
- Place a block around each phrase that describes all Christians everywhere, also in verse 1.
- In the left margin of verse 1 write, *A Glorious Reality*.
- Circle all occurrences of the word *beloved* in the letter.
- In the margin of verses 3-4 write, *Jude's Reason for Writing* and double-underline the key phrase.
- Place parenthesis around the phrase *once for all delivered* (v. 3).
- Numerically label the two errors committed by the false teachers (v. 4).
- Circle the phrases *certain people* and *ungodly people* and draw a connecting line between them.

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,
To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:
2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

3 Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

5 Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

8 Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." 10 But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. 11 Woe to

them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. 12 These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

14 It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." 16 These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. 18 They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." 19 It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Group Time

- As your group time begins, take a few minutes and read the book of Jude by assigning each paragraph to a different reader.

INTERPRETATION *(What does the passage mean?)*

1. How would you describe the tone or mood of Jude's letter? Give the reasons for your answer.

2. What was going on in the churches, in general, that compelled Jude to write this letter?

3. Consider the Greek word *epagonizomai*, translated contend. What English word stems from it? What does it mean for Jude to urge us to contend for the faith?

4. Jude asserts that the core truths of *the faith* are worth contending for because they were delivered to the saints *once for all* (v. 3). Make a list of the essential truths of the faith. How do we determine those truths that are *essential* from those that are *secondary*?

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5. What were the two errors committed by the false teachers? In your own words, describe what was happening in verse 4. What are some specific ways that you've seen the truth become perverted or twisted?

APPLICATION (*How does the passage apply to our lives?*)

1. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that the greatest threat to the Gospel is not from the outside but from within? Explain your answer.

2. Jude shared that he set out to write one letter but felt compelled to write a different one. How do you discern the difference between what you'd like to say and what needs to be said?

3. What five essentials listed above do you feel well-equipped to contend for? How can you become better equipped to defend the other essentials?

