

Contending for the Faith



A 4-Week Study of Jude

with Lisa Baker



Bible Study Tools

Introduction to Jude

Contention. It's all around us in this world. We can define contention as fighting, grappling, and warring. Wars have continually raged on the earth, almost since the beginning of time, even when they are called "cold wars," as with the escalated tension between the U.S. and Russia in the twentieth century. Humans, we know, contend for land, power, wealth, and influence.

But what does the Bible mean when it tells us in Jude 3 to contend for the faith? Are we supposed to fight our way through the people who oppose the Gospel message we proclaim? Do we make our stand with fists raised, ready to physically and verbally combat anyone who disagrees with us?

As we study what Jude means when he says, "contend for the faith," we will examine the whole counsel of God and be excellent Bible students by following the admonition to maintain the truth that Scripture interprets Scripture.

Throughout the next four weeks, we will spend our five weekdays learning what Jude means, and how we are to contend for the faith. Parts of the text of Jude are disputed as to their meaning, but we will focus on the big picture in our study — that is, how each part of the book teaches us to contend for the faith.

First, let's pray.

Father God, Your Word is our light and life — both Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and Your Scriptures. Help us as we seek to divide Your Word rightly, understand, gain wisdom, and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it's in His name we pray. Amen



Week One: Understanding the Text

Monday

Read the book of Jude (it's an easy-to-find, wee but powerful book just before Revelation).

Tuesday

Read through Jude again and list your observations about the text. Don't try to interpret anything or cross-reference; just read and make notes (e.g., Jude calls himself a servant of Christ). Your list can get very long, but trust the Lord to funnel it all into very concise lessons.

Wednesday

Read through Jude again. This time, write any questions you have about the text regarding contending for the faith (e.g., why does Jude tell the church they need to contend?).

Thursday

Read through Jude again and do some exploring through Scripture using excellent hermeneutical skills. Look at the context of the book in three ways:

1. The literary context (what genre is the book of Jude?)
2. The historical context (what was transpiring in the world and in the church at the time Jude wrote the letter?)
3. The Christological context (The Bible's whole message and how it all points to Jesus Christ).

Involved in this part of the study is the revelation of which themes, words, and phrases Jude centers upon.

Friday

Read through Jude once again. By now the flow and message should be very familiar to you. You may even have more observations and questions.



Week Two: Godly Contenders vs. Contentious Contenders

Jude 1-7

Monday

Read Jude 1.

As Jesus' youngest brother and as a believer, Jude knows he serves Christ. Ponder how Jude refers to Christians:

- We are called (Acts 15:17; Romans 1:6-7, 8:28).
- We are beloved in God (Ephesians 5:1).
- We are kept for Jesus Christ — kept for Him and by Him (John 17:2, 9-11; Hebrews 13:5).

These are three truths the world cannot fathom nor remove from us (John 10:28-29).

Find other passages where the Bible says we are called, beloved, and kept for Christ.

Tuesday

Read Jude 2.

Jude's prayer for Christians is that mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to us. Define each.

Write why you believe Jude began his letter to the Christians (both Jewish and Gentile believers) with these affirmations. What have mercy, peace, and love to do with contending for the faith?

Wednesday

Read Jude 3.

Jude's plan to write a letter regarding his and the recipients' "common salvation," was thwarted by a problem which caused him to add to that purpose. Verse 3 gives us Jude's main directive: "contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."

What does Jude mean by:

- Contend for the faith?
- Common salvation?
- Once for all delivered?
- Saints?

Thursday

Verse 4 tells us what happened to the church Jude addressed. "Creepers" denotes stealth and wickedness. How were they able to come in unnoticed? (Look to your contextual study for the answer to this.)

Jude says these infiltrators were:

1. "Long ago designated for this condemnation."
2. "Ungodly people."
3. People who "pervert God's grace into sensuality."
4. People who "deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

Friday

Verses 5-7 are a narration of the actions of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Verse 5 reiterates Jesus led the Jewish nation out of Egypt as in the pillar of fire and cloud (Exodus 13:20-21; 14:19; Deuteronomy 5:6; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4) and then, “afterward destroyed those who did not believe.” We, as Christians are being led by Christ on an exodus through and eventually out of this world. He leads; we cleave, and He will destroy the unbelievers toward their final end (see verse 7).

Jude goes on to mention even angels who disobeyed their proper places (“position

of authority”) are set for eternal judgment (v. 6).

Sodom and Gomorrah too are mentioned as an example of people who, by indulging in “sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire,” undergo eternal punishment by fire.

God metes out perfect justice.

God’s Word is His truth, and His truth supersedes the lies of the evil ones.

How will you counteract the lies and share His truth to others using this passage? (See Acts 20:26-27, 29-30, Acts 5:29.)



Week Three: Judgement

Jude 8-16

Monday

Jude continues to educate his readers about the character and behaviors of the unbelievers — those who are against Christ (Matthew 12:30). For us as it was for the first-century Christians, unbelievers are not disagreeing with us so much that they are disagreeing with Christ. Jude continues with their traits.

They:

1. Rely on their dreams
2. Defile the flesh
3. Reject authority
4. Blaspheme the glorious ones

What (or who) controls their dreams?

What did they do to defile their flesh?

Whose authority did they reject? (See Matthew 9:6; 10:1; 21:24-27; Romans 13:1; Titus 2:15)

Who are the glorious ones, and how might they (or their beliefs) have been blasphemed?

Tuesday

Continuing with the theme of blaspheming, what is the meaning of the word? Why did Jude follow verse 8 with a look at the Archangel Michael not blaspheming when

he rebuked the devil? What did Michael do? (There's a huge lesson for us here).

Wednesday

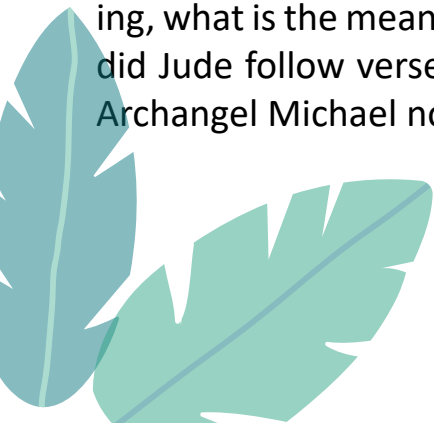
Jude exacts a chilling indictment on the unbelievers he's been describing (verse 10). "They blaspheme all that they do not understand." Isn't that what happens with unbelievers who confront us about our faith? The natural person does not understand spiritual matters (1 Corinthians 2:14), therefore their attack will take unwarranted and twisted avenues to strike believers.

What is the meaning of verse 10b? See Romans 1:18-32 for insight into what Jude means in this verse.

Thursday

Verse 12 gives us more results from the beliefs and actions of ungodly people:

1. They hide their true selves and fearlessly take part in "love feasts" without believing in Jesus Christ. These probably refer to the fellowship meal partaken before communion.
2. They are "waterless clouds," meaning they provide no spiritual sustenance to others as they drift from one lie to another.



3. Fruitless trees which have no spiritual fruit.
4. Wild waves of the sea, no course or solid foundation.
5. Wandering stars (influencers who do great harm to the kingdom of God).

For these people, God has reserved “the gloom of utter darkness forever.” (Italics added)

Where does the Bible give more information about the utter darkness?

Friday

The Lord will execute judgment on the ungodly, and He “will come with ten thousands of His holy ones.” Where in Scripture are references to ten thousands (or ten thousand times ten thousand, two hundred million, etc.)? Who are “His holy ones?”

What exactly will the Lord do to the ungodly?



Week 4: The Perseverance of the Saints

Jude 17-25

Monday

Jude tells us to remember what the Apostles predicted of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look up the cross references for verse 18 to see what was predicted.

What does verse 19 say about these people?

Tuesday

We might say, “Ahh, finally, Jude tells us what we are supposed to do.” But hasn’t the Bible told us throughout itself who and what we are to be? Look again at verse 2. Does anyone but a Christian understand and reflect the Lord’s mercy, peace, and love? It’s a key because we need all three to contend for our faith.

Sincere and sure in our faith, we are to be diligent students and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. His Spirit will guide us into all truth as we look into the Scriptures.

That is what Jude means when he says, “build yourselves up in your most holy faith.” What does holy mean and how is it related to our faith (look again at verse 3). Jude also tells us to pray in the Spirit (as opposed to worldly people (unbelievers), who are devoid of the Spirit (as seen

in verse 19). Where else does God’s Word tell us to pray in the Spirit?

Wednesday

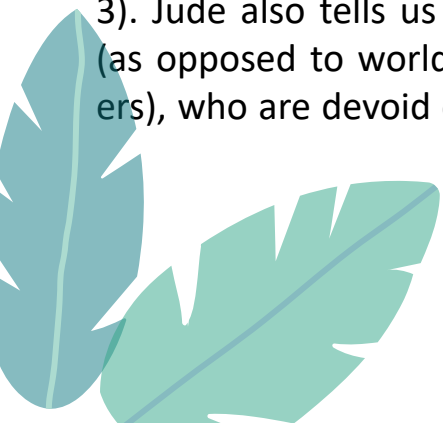
Jude says in verse 21 to keep ourselves in the love of God. How does a Christian do that? He also tells us to wait for the Lord Jesus Christ’s mercy — His mercy that leads to eternal life. What does mercy mean and how does it relate to what Christ has done for us? Remember, we’re kept in Christ and mercy keeps us from something.

We are to be merciful to doubters as Christ is merciful to us. Doubting is not unbelief. Have you ever doubted? What brought you back to solid footing? Did another believer pray for you and encourage you through the Word?

But contending for the faith means interacting with unbelievers, and Jude gives us wise counsel.

What does Jude mean by the fire?

What does it mean to fear as you show mercy?



Jude says to hate even a garment stained by the flesh. He means be careful when we aid another who has been influenced and/or practices worldly ways, lest we get entangled in their sin (2 Timothy 2:4).

Thursday

Jude's doxology is a beautiful worship of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We cannot do anything holy apart from Him and only He is able to keep us from stumbling. He is the One who will present us as blameless in His presence and through Him before our great God and Father. And with great joy! To Christ be all glory, majesty, dominion, and authority "before all time and now and forever" (Jude 25).

How can we glorify Christ this day when we speak to unbelievers?

Friday

What a study of contending for the faith! It involves strapping on our full armor every day — armor won for us by the Lord Christ (Ephesians 6:10-20). Every day we know

who we are in Christ and the Bible gives us instructions on how to live out our faith. Look up some passages with instructions (The epistles are full of them, e.g. 1 Timothy 6:11-12). If we keep alert and know the Scriptures, creepers will not be able to infiltrate our fellowship and attempt to besmirch (or blaspheme) the saints or our Lord.

As you study and thank God for life in His name, reflect on what happens to unbelievers. Those who die unkept by Christ (apart from him because of unbelief) will be forever in the "gloom of utter darkness." Jude has described their demise; we know their end, and that truth should give us chills and also drive us to fervent prayers for the unsaved.

What is this place of utter darkness? Hell. Unbelievers will be in hell with bodies kept for God's wrath.

Believers, however, will enter eternity in joy with glorified bodies; we will be in the presence of the Lord forever.



Conclusion

Contending for the faith is a daily exercise, and it's a lot of work. But the benefits are eternal – both for us and those the Lord brings into our pathway!

Father, bless the student of Your Word with growth in Jesus' name. May they glorify You with how they contend for the faith won by our Lord Jesus on the cross. Thank You for saving us for our good and for Your glory. For it's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

For further study, read 2 Peter to see the similarities between it and Jude. Doing this will bring even greater insight into Jude's short but powerful book.

*Lisa Loraine Baker is the multiple award-winning author of *Someplace to be Somebody*. She writes fiction and nonfiction. In addition to writing for the Salem Web Network, Lisa serves as a Word Weavers' mentor and is part of a critique group. Lisa and her husband, Stephen, a pastor, live in a small Ohio village with their crazy cat, Lewis.*

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