



Introduction

D.J. Rowston called Jude the “most neglected book in the New Testament.” The neglect is likely due to several factors. First, the book is relatively short. In America, we are tempted to equate worth with size. Since the book is short, many assume (wrongly) the book is unimportant. Second, the book is tucked away in the latter part of the Bible and easy to miss. People do not stumble into studying the book of Jude. They must go looking for it. Third, the message of the book is perceived as “negative.” Jude spends the majority of his time warning against false teachers and their impending destruction. The message of judgment and condemnation drives many readers away. For these reasons, Jude often gets overlooked by Christians and pastors alike.

Yet I am convinced the neglect of Jude is a serious mistake. Jude warns against false teachers, a reminder that is just as necessary now as it was when Jude originally penned his letter. Furthermore, Jude encourages Christians to remain in God’s love by building themselves up, praying in the Holy Spirit, and waiting for the mercy of the Lord Jesus, another helpful reminder. Jude’s message of warning and encouragement is needed in the church today. May preachers pick up this book, study it, and preach it to their church for the glory of God!

Preaching Outlines

The following outlines illustrate how Jude has been preached by others. While you may love a particular outline and feel it cannot be improved upon, I would encourage you to write your own outlines for the series. However, if you decide to adopt one of the outlines, please make sure to attribute authorship to the original preacher.

Daniel Akin

Jude 1-2

How to Be a Happy Slave

- I. Know Who You Are in Christ (vs. 1)
 - A. You are purchased.
 - B. You are called.
 - C. You are loved.
 - D. You are protected.
- II. Know What You Have from Christ (vs. 2)
 - A. Enjoy abundant mercy.
 - B. Enjoy abundant peace.
 - C. Enjoy abundant love.

Jude 3-4

Contending for the Faith of Jesus

- I. Know What You Believe (vs. 3)
 - A. Earnestly contend for the faith (vs. 3).
 - B. Remember the teaching and warning of the apostles (vs. 17).
 - C. Build yourselves up in the most holy faith (vs. 20).
 - D. Pray in the Holy Spirit (vs. 20).
 - E. Keep yourselves in the love of God (vs. 21).
 - F. Look for the mercy of the Lord to bring you eternal life (vs. 21).
 - G. Show mercy to Christians who are doubting, snatch unbelievers from the fire, and cautiously show mercy to the corrupt (vs. 22-23).
- II. Know How to Live (vs. 4)
 - A. Beware of those who deceive the church.
 - B. Beware of those who distort God's grace.
 - C. Beware of those who deny our Lord.

Jared Bumpers

Jude 1-2

Hey Jude

- I. Our Faith Is More Important than Our Family Ties (vs. 1a)
 - A. We Serve Christ – Not Self – As Lord (Jude is a bondservant)
 - B. We Trust Christ – Not Family – for Salvation (Jude is the brother of James—and Jesus!—but he does not rely on family ties for salvation.)
- II. Our Theological Identity Is More Important than Our Geographical Location (vs. 1b)
 - A. We are called
 - B. We are loved
 - C. We are kept
- III. Our Spiritual Blessings Are More Important than Our Material Possessions (vs. 2)
 - A. We Receive Mercy
 - B. We Receive Peace
 - C. We Receive Love

Jude 3-4

Let's Get Ready to Rumble

- I. We Fight Out of Necessity (vs. 3a)

*Jude wanted to write about their common salvation, but the threat to the church forced Jude to write a different letter
- II. We Fight Earnestly (vs. 3b)

*Given the threat to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, Jude called his readers to earnestly contend for the faith
- III. We Fight Spiritually (vs. 4)

J. Ligon Duncan

Jude 1-2

What is a Christian?

- I. A Christian Leader's Self-Understanding and View of Christ (vs. 1a)
 - II. Three Divine Graces to Christian that Impact Our Purpose (vs. 1b)
 - III. Three Real Blessings Christians Ought to Long For (vs. 2)
- OR
- I. How a Christian Views Himself and His Savior (vs. 1a)
 - II. What a Christian Is (vs. 1b)
 - III. What a Christian Wants (vs. 2)

Jude 3-4

Defending the Faith

- I. Christians Must Be Prepared to Contend for the Faith (vs. 3)
 - II. Why Christians Must Be Prepared to Contend for the Faith (vs. 4)
- OR
- I. The Congregational Responsibility to Keep the Faith (vs. 3)
 - II. The Present Reality of False Teachers in the Early Church (vs. 4)

Jude 5-16

The Contradiction of Ungodliness

- I. God Will Deal with the Ungodly, Whether They Claim to Be Godly/Spiritual or Not! (vs. 5-10)
- II. False Prophets Can Be Identified by Their Character, Attitudes, and Actions (vs. 11-13)
- III. The Most Dire Punishment Is Reserved for and Awaits the Ungodly (vs. 14-16)

Jude 5-7

Three Truths to Never Forget

I. Remember the Danger of Unbelief
(vs. 5)

- A. Do not trust in the security of a past experience.
- B. Do not trust in the security of a future expectation.

Application: Are you trusting God?

II. Remember the Dishonor of Rebellion
(vs. 6)

- A. Accept God's Plan for Your Life.
- B. Respect God's Power Over Your Life.

Application: Are you submitting to God?

III. Remember the Destiny of the Immoral (vs. 7)

- A. Sexual perversion can consume you.
- B. Eternal punishment can claim you.

Application: Are you obeying God?

Jude 8-10

Out of Touch with Reality

I. Avoid Being Physically Immoral (vs. 8)

- A. Don't become defiled.
- B. Don't become defiant.
- C. Don't become disrespectful.

II. Avoid Being Spiritually Intoxicated
(vs. 9)

- A. Know Your Place in God's Economy.
- B. Know Your Power in God's Authority.

III. Avoid Being Mentally Ignorant (vs. 10)

- A. Guard Your Mouth.
- B. Guard Your Mind.

*The fight was not physical in nature; they were to contend for the faith because outsiders had crept in, distorting God's grace and denying Christ's Lordship

Jude 5-16

Back to the Future

I. Sin Is Serious...Seek Godliness (vs. 5-10)

- A. Unbelief leads to judgment
- B. Rebellion leads to judgment
- C. Sexual sin leads to judgment

II. False Teaching is Dangerous...Seek Truth
(vs. 11-13)

- A. Hidden reefs – leave you shipwrecked
- B. Waterless clouds – leave you dry
- C. Fruitless trees – leave you barren
- D. Wild waves – leave you dirty
- E. Wandering starts – leave you aimless

III. God's Judgment Is Certain...Seek Grace (vs. 14-16)

Jude 17-23

Don't Stop Believing

I. Remember Biblical Truth (vs. 17-19)

- A. We can trust the teaching of the apostles (vs. 17-18)
- B. We can recognize the character of false teachers (vs. 19)

- 1. They are sensual
- 2. They cause division
- 3. They do not possess the Spirit

II. Remain in God's Love (vs. 20-21)

- A. Build yourself up in the faith
- B. Pray in the Spirit
- C. Wait for the mercy of Jesus

III. Rescue Struggling Christians (vs. 22-23)

- A. Rescue those who doubt
- B. Rescue those who are in the fire
- C. Rescue those who are stained

Jude 17-23

Remembering, Building, Showing Mercy

I. Christians Are to Remember Biblical Admonitions Regarding False Teachers (vs. 17-19)

II. Christians Are to Take Care to Abide in the Love of God (vs. 20-21)

III. Christians Are to Deal with Erring Brethren Wisely and Mercifully (vs. 22-23)

OR

I. An Exhortation to Remember Apostolic Warnings (vs. 17-19)

II. An Exhortation to Grow in Doctrine, Prayer, Experience, and Hope (vs. 20-21)

III. Instructions for Attitudes Toward Those Impacted by False Teaching (vs. 22-23)

Jude 11-16

When God Judges the Ungodly

- I. God Judges the Ungodly Because of Their Decisions (vs. 11)
 - A. They are hateful.
 - B. They are greedy.
 - C. They are rebellious.
- II. God Judges the Ungodly Because of Their Deception (vs. 12-13)
 - A. They are destructive (vs. 12).
 - B. They disappoint (vs. 12).
 - C. They are destitute (vs. 12).
 - D. They defile (vs. 13). E. They disappear (vs. 13).
- III. God Judges the Ungodly Because It Is Their Destiny (vs. 14-15)
 - A. They complain without shame (cf. 15).
 - B. They cater to the sensual.
 - C. They charm the simple.

Jude 17-23

Godly Wisdom for a Healthy Christian

- I. Remember the Words of Our Lord (vs. 17-19)
 - A. The presence of false teachers is certain (vs. 17-18).
 - B. The portrait of false teachers is clear (vs. 18-19).
 - 1. They are scoffers (vs. 18).
 - 2. They are sensual (vs. 18-19).
 - 3. They are schismatic (vs. 19).
 - 4. They are Spiritless (vs. 19).
- II. Remain in the Watchcare of God's Love (vs. 20-21)
 - A. Grow in the Scriptures (vs. 20).
 - B. Pray in the Spirit (vs. 20).
 - C. Watch for the Savior (vs. 21).
- III. Rescue the Wandering Who Are Lost (vs. 22-23)
 - A. God will preserve us.
 - B. God will protect us.

Jude 24-25

Doxology

- I. Our God Is Able (vs. 24-25a)
 - A. He is able to keep us
 - B. He is able to sanctify us
 - C. He is able to save us
- II. Our God Is Glorious (vs. 25b)
 - A. He is glorious
 - B. He is majestic
 - C. He is powerful
 - D. He is authoritative
 - E. He is eternal

Jude 24-25

The Doxology of God and the Security of the Believer

I believe in the eternal security of the believer because:

I. The Power of God (vs. 24)

- A. God will preserve us.
- B. God will protect us.

II. The Promise of God (vs. 25)

- A. We will see His glory.
- B. We will share His joy.

III. The Person of God (vs. 25)

- A. He is our Sovereign.
- B. He is our Savior.

IV. The Praise of God (vs. 25)

- A. Praise Him for His glory forever.
- B. Praise Him for His majesty forever.
- C. Praise Him for His sovereignty forever.
- D. Praise Him for His authority.

Problem Passages

Although Jude is short, the letter contains several challenging passages for preachers. The following three passages/issues must be considered as one preaches through Jude. My goal is to clearly articulate the particular challenge each passage presents and provide some suggestions for tackling the issue head-on.

1. Who are the “outsiders” in Jude?

In verse 4, Jude identifies his opponents. They are men who have “crept in unnoticed...ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (vs. 4). The traditional interpretation of the verse understands these outsiders as false teachers. Jude plainly states they “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” Therefore, Jude must be writing to address false teachers who have invaded the church.

The alternate view, which sees the outsiders as immoral people, points to the behavior of the opponents as evidence Jude is addressing ungodly living rather than false teaching. Before Jude says these men deny Jesus, he says they “pervert the grace of our God into sensuality.” Therefore, according to this second view, Jude must be writing to address immoral people who invaded the church.

Which position is correct? The short answer is both. Neither position is mutually exclusive. Jude condemns the speech of his opponents in the letter. They deny our Lord and Master (vs. 3 – although it should be noted those who advocate the “immoral people” view argue the opponents deny the Lordship of Jesus by their actions, not their words; blaspheme “the glorious ones” (vs. 8) and “all they do not understand” (vs. 10); and are “grumblers” and “loud-mouthed boasters” (vs. 16). Given the number of references to their ungodly speech, the outsiders likely functioned as teachers or had opportunities to teach within the church. Jude also condemns the behavior of the outsiders. They “pervert the grace of our God into sensuality” (vs. 4), defile the flesh (vs. 8), and follow “their own sinful desires” (vs. 16). When preaching through Jude, the false teaching and the immoral behavior of the outsiders should be addressed.

2. Who are “the angels” in Jude?

In warning his readers of God’s judgment against sin, Jude reminded his readers of “the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling” in verse 6. Who are these angels? Since the previous example (the rebellious Israelites, vs. 5) and the following example (Sodom and Gomorrah, vs. 7) are taken from the Old Testament, one can reasonably conclude Jude is referencing an Old Testament story about angels in verse 6. Some argue Jude is referencing the angels who joined Satan in his rebellion against God, but a strong case can be made for viewing the rebellious angels as the angelic interlopers described in Genesis 6.

The angels, or “sons of God,” in Genesis 6 left their position of authority and married the daughters of man. The unnatural union of angels and humans precipitated God’s judgment and the flood. The sexual sin of the angels incurred God’s judgment. In support of the view that Jude is referencing the rebellious angels in Genesis 6 is the phrasing of the following verse. When Jude introduces the sexual sin and unnatural desires in Sodom and Gomorrah, he links their behavior to the angels. The angels abandoned their position and left their proper dwelling, just as Sodom and Gomorrah “likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desires.” Jude clearly saw a link between the sin of the angels and the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, which included sexual immorality and an attempt by the men of the city to sexually assault the angels. Therefore, given the connection between the sin of the angels and the

sin of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, it seems best to view the rebellious angels in Jude 6 as the “sons of God” who intermarried in Genesis 6.

3. Why does Jude reference non-canonical texts?

The most challenging aspect of preaching Jude is probably the use of non-canonical texts in the letter. Why did Jude use non-inspired texts? Does he believe the non-canonical texts are Scripture? How do the non-inspired texts fit into his argument? These are questions that must be considered as one prepares to preach through Jude.

Jude alluded to two non-canonical texts in his short letter: The Assumption of Moses and The Book of Enoch. The first text, The Assumption of Moses, apparently contained a story about Satan and Michael the Archangel arguing over the body of Moses. Unfortunately, only one, incomplete copy of the text exists, and the story concerning the dispute over Moses’ body is missing from the manuscript. The second text, The Book of Enoch, is cited in Jude 14-15. While some would argue Jude believed The Book of Enoch was inspired, the conclusion is unfounded. Other New Testament writers, like Paul in Acts 17 and Titus 1, cited texts that were non-inspired and non-canonical. Nevertheless, the texts or sources conveyed truth. Similarly, Jude could cite true statements from The Book of Enoch without viewing the work as inspired. Another possibility is Jude cited the outsiders own “books” to defeat them. According to this view, Jude cited works the outsiders valued in order to prove God’s judgment against sin and to call his readers to faithfulness to God. Peter Gentry has articulated this view here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2J0j3RcBMQ.

Key Themes and Motifs

In his short letter, Jude covers several major themes. The most prominent themes are God’s preserving grace, the importance of sound doctrine, the certainty of God’s against rebellious sinners, and the glory of God. First, Jude emphasized the “keeping” grace of God. At the beginning of his letter, he identified his readers as those who are “kept for Jesus Christ” (vs. 1). At the end of his letter, Jude praises the God “who is able to keep you from stumbling” (vs. 24). The book opens and closes with a reminder that God keeps His people. This does not absolve Christians of any responsibility to love and follow Christ, as Jude also commands his readers to “keep” themselves in God’s love. Nevertheless, the emphasis in Jude is on God’s preserving grace. He keeps His people. This must have been a huge comfort to these Christians who were being tempted to listen to false teachers and imitate their immoral behavior.

Second, Jude highlighted the importance of sound doctrine. He encouraged his readers to “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (vs. 3). “The faith” refers to a settled body of doctrinal truth delivered to God’s people by the apostles. The outsiders—by their belief and their behavior—were challenging the teaching delivered to the church by the apostles. Jude encouraged his readers to reject these outsiders and remain committed to sound doctrine by “building yourselves up in your most holy faith” (vs. 20). Failure to do so would prove disastrous, as the next theme demonstrates.

Third, Jude reminded these Christians of the reality of God’s judgment against rebellious sinners. As a matter of fact, Jude spent more time explaining the certainty of God’s judgment on unrepentant people than he did on anything else (cf. Jude 5-16). Jude pointed to the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, the rebellious angels in Genesis 6, and the immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah to prove the inevitability of judgment on those who refuse to believe God (vs. 5-7). He also pointed to Cain, Balaam, and Korah as examples of people who underwent God’s judgment due to

their rebelliousness (vs. 11). Finally, he quoted Enoch to show God will come to execute judgment on the ungodly (vs. 14-15). The judgment that awaits unrepentant sinners—including these false teachers—was intended to motivate Jude’s readers to avoid these outsiders and remain committed to the faith.

Fourth, Jude described the glory and greatness of God at the beginning and the end of the book. At the beginning of his letter, Jude identified his readers by reminding them of God’s work in their life. God called them, loved them, and kept them (vs. 1). At the end of the letter, Jude includes a doxology (vs. 24-25). He says God is able to keep us from stumbling and present us blameless before his presence with joy (vs. 24). He is our Savior through Jesus Christ (vs. 25). He is eternally glorious, majestic, powerful, and authoritative (vs. 25). Both the beginning and the end emphasize God’s greatness and glory.

Helpful Commentaries and Resources

Craftsmen need good tools, and preachers need good resources. When tackling Jude, I’ve found the following resources particularly helpful. Some are more technical and academic, while others are more pastoral and practical. Preachers should try to read several of each type of commentary as they prepare their sermons. I have divided the commentaries into two categories to help readers identify the type of commentary so they can pick a few from each one:

Technical

Bauckham, Richard. 2 Peter, Jude. Vol. 50. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, 1983.

Davids, Peter H. The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.

Green, Gene L. Jude and 2 Peter. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

Moo, Douglas J. 2 Peter, Jude. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1996.

Schreiner, Thomas R. 1, 2 Peter, Jude. The New American Commentary. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2003.

Pastoral

Helm, David R. 1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

Lucas, Dick and Christopher Green. The Message of 2 Peter and Jude. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1995.

Shaddix, Jim and Daniel L. Akin. Exalting Jesus in 2 Peter and Jude. Christ-Centered Exposition. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2018.

How to Preach Christ from Jude

Christian preachers have a responsibility to proclaim Christ from all of Scripture. Like, Paul, we should be able to say, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Colossians 1:28). The following suggestions are not comprehensive, but they do provide specific ways for preachers to declare the excellencies of Christ from Jude.

There are multiple ways to preach Christ and the gospel from the introduction (Jude 1-2). First, Jude describes himself as a “bondservant” of Jesus Christ, indicating he has been bought by the blood of Christ and belongs to Him. Rather than highlight his familial relationship to Jesus, he humbly acknowledges Christ’s Lordship. Second,

Jude writes to Christians and reminds them they are called, kept, and loved. The preacher should be able to articulate the gospel by explaining how each of these truths serve as the foundation for their salvation. Finally, preachers can proclaim the gospel by providing a distinctly Christian understanding of Jude’s “prayer-wish” in verse 2. Christian mercy, peace, and love are most clearly understood when viewed in relation to Christ.

The second section (Jude 3-4) also contains several opportunities to preach the gospel. First, Jude expressed his desire to write about their “common salvation.” Preachers can explain salvation – both what it is and how it is accomplished – and what Jude means by “common.” Second, Jude urges them to contend for the faith delivered to the saints. The origin of the doctrinal content designated as “the faith” –as well as the content of “the faith” –would inevitably lead to Christ and the gospel. Finally, Jude’s comments about distorting God’s grace and denying Christ’s Lordship naturally lead to a discussion of grace, the gospel, and the implications of the gospel.

The third section (Jude 5-16) consists of warning and judgment. Jude cites multiple Old Testament examples (Jude 5-7, 11) and extra-biblical sources (Jude 8-10, 14-16) to demonstrate God judges unrepentant sinners. Preachers should remind their listeners of God’s holiness and his judgment of sin, as the passage emphasizes, but they should also remind their listeners of the One who “suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18).

In the fourth section (Jude 17-23), Jude instructs his readers to remember the teaching of the apostles (vs. 17-19), keep themselves in the love of God (vs. 20-21), and help others who are struggling (vs. 22-23). The simplest way to preach the gospel from this section is to discuss the love of God and how believers can keep themselves in His love via the three related participles in the text (building, praying, waiting). God loves His children, and we should keep ourselves in His love by building up our faith in Him and His Word; praying to God through Christ, our mediator; and waiting for Christ’s return.

The last section (Jude 24-25) is a doxology. Jude ended his letter by praising God for who He is and what He has done. The first way to preach the gospel from the doxology is to emphasize God’s work in salvation from beginning to end. Jude comforted his readers in the face of false teaching, reminding them God is able to keep them from stumbling and will present them with great joy in glory. The second way to preach the gospel is more straightforward. Jude directed his praise to “the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (vs. 24). God saved His people through Jesus Christ, and the preacher should be able to preach the gospel easily here.

7. Why You Should Preach Jude

The book of Jude is short, but don’t judge the book by its length. Jude packs a punch. Pastors would be wise to study and preach the book to their congregations. Here are three specific reasons why you should preach Jude:

1. The book has been neglected by the church at large. Many Christians are unfamiliar with Jude. Apart from the verse encouraging them to contend for the faith, they do not know anything about the letter. Preachers have an opportunity to introduce their readers to a neglected yet relevant book for churches and Christians.

2. The book contains a needed warning for the contemporary church. In Jude's day, people within the church were distorting God's grace and denying Christ's Lordship. The same thing occurs today. Many people abuse God's grace. Because they know God forgives sin, they live unrepentant lives and presume on His grace. Moreover, professing Christians today often deny Christ's Lordship. While they may not vocalize it, they deny His Lordship with their life. The warning against God's judgment is needed today.

3. The book provides hope for Christians surrounded by apostasy. One of the major themes in Jude is God's preserving grace. Believers are "kept for Jesus" (vs. 1) and will be kept "from stumbling" (vs. 24). Even though outsiders have invaded the church and threaten to lead Christians astray, Jude placed his confidence in the God who is able to keep believers "from stumbling" and present them "blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy" (vs. 24). Christians should be encouraged to place their hope and confident in this preserving God.