

Tough Questions
Week One

Section One: Jude 1-4

- Jude was the physical half-brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55), but he saw his brother as nothing more than that: his brother.
- Jude joined his other brothers in ridiculing Jesus out of unbelief (John 7:3-5).
- Jude moved from skeptic to “servant of Jesus Christ.”
- In Acts 1:14, he, Jesus’ other brothers, and Jesus’ mother, Mary, were praying with the apostles in Jerusalem.
- Jude’s life reminds us that faith is about our present, not our past.

Section One: Jude 1-4

- Defending the faith doesn't appear to be Jude's original purpose in writing: "I was eager to write you about the salvation we share" (verse 3).
- However, disturbing news had reached Jude that the faith was under attack from within; it had "come in by stealth" (verse 4).
- Jude was ready to alter his plans and call the church to "contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all" (verse 3).

Section One: Jude 1-4

- Contending for the faith was not something Jude was calling a select few to do, like some “special forces unit” of the church.
- He was writing to all believers. Every Christian must contend for the faith.
- We are called to contend, a word that pictures a struggle.
- Christians should rise up and challenge false teaching, error, and any misrepresentation of “the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all.” We don’t need to forfeit to any opponent; instead, we strive to ensure that the truth is heard.

Section One: Jude 1-4

- As he contended for the faith, Jude modeled two traits for us:
- Humility. Jude was the half-brother of the Messiah, but he didn't wave that in people's faces. Jude had serious first-century Jewish credentials, yet he didn't waste words about himself.
- Brevity. Jude's letter is one of the shortest books in the Bible. This was Jude's "elevator speech" against false teaching and error. Some occasions may call for a deeply researched defense of the faith, but many times, our defense does not need to take a long time or be overly complicated.

Section Two: Jude 20-23

- Earlier, Jude had noted false teachers had entered the church (verse 4), and throughout the bulk of his letter (verses 5-19), Jude outlined the character and vices of these people.
- He wanted his readers to know and recognize them so that they could stand against those who sought to sow doubt and confusion among the believers.
- Now, Jude offered four specific things we should do as we contend for the faith.

Section Two: Jude 20-23

- Build up your faith. “Build yourselves up in your most holy faith” (v. 20). Unfortunately, too many Christians come to faith in Christ, but they never grow in that faith. A favorite tactic of many cults and false religions is to isolate uninformed Christians and catch them off guard.
- Pray. In Jude 19, Jude described the false teachers as “worldly, not having the Spirit.” True believers, though, do have the Holy Spirit in their lives, and we must rely on the Spirit at all times. A Christian never loses the indwelling presence of the Spirit (Romans 8:9), but we must continually rely on Him and let Him fill us (Ephesians 5:18).

Section Two: Jude 20-23

- Love. The most important decision I can make today, as a follower of Jesus, is to live in the atmosphere of God's love.
- "Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting expectantly" (verse 21).
- The word "keep" is telling. We don't "keep" in the sense of locking ourselves away, but we keep an eye on ourselves to ensure we don't drift away from the love of God.
- Christians are in the custody of God's love, so let's keep an eye on things to make sure we don't wander away!

Section Two: Jude 20-23

- Show mercy. Defending the faith is never about being the smartest person in the room.
- The goal is never to win an argument and lose a soul.
- When we contend for the faith, we are to do so with mercy.
- The imagery is powerful. Jude instructed us to reach out mercifully to “those who waver” and doubt; others we may save only by “snatching them from the fire” (verse 23). Fire is the eternal torment in hell.

Section Three: Jude 24-25

- This is one of the great doxologies in Scripture. This letter was not simply distributed and read as we commonly do today.
- Some scholars have estimated that only about 10 percent of the Roman Empire could read.
- Jude's letter was likely read aloud like a sermon in the context of a house church or small gathering.
- So as the original hearers heard the call to contend for the faith, they also heard this doxology spoken over them.

Section Three: Jude 24-25

- What was the blessing in Jude? You are not alone.
- Jesus is with you, protecting you as you stand and contend for the faith. In standing for Christ, one never stands alone.
- The blessing doesn't stop there. Jesus also empowers us to “stand in the presence of his glory.”
- We may face adversity, but we can stand before Him “without blemish and with great joy” (v. 24).

Section Three: Jude 24-25

- No matter what challenge you face today, you do not confront it alone because He “is able”—that is, fully capable—to present you faultless, as if you had never sinned.
- In Christ, you are utterly forgiven, cleansed, purpose-filled, focused, and called.
- God’s protection and power are with us, so that we can contend for the faith.
- We don’t have to rely on ourselves.