

Jude: Keep Close to Christ, Who Keeps You

God's judgment for disobedience is real. It happened and will happen. But Christ keeps us who are faithful. Therefore, keep close to Christ.

What distracts us from the faith? What leads us astray? What really matters?

- Entertainment
- False teaching

Jude begins his letter with a healthy dose of theology. (1-2)

- The church is 1) called; 2) beloved in God the Father; and 3) kept by/for Jesus Christ.
- The Christian virtues of mercy, peace, and love are multiplied to the church.

Jude wanted to encourage them in their common faith but needed to write instead to challenge them to contend for the faith once delivered for all.

1. What is the faith?
2. When was it delivered?

The faith Jude talks about is the gospel. It is the message of salvation, that God has saved all people, all nations, through his Son.

[3. Why must it be contended for?]

The faith must be contended for because of people who deny it by denying Jesus as Lord and Master. (4)

- The false teachers crept in unnoticed (4). Division and disobedience usually starts subtly. It usually starts with someone claiming to represent the grace of God, but with their own twist to that "once delivered faith."
- For these, judgment has been promised--they were "designated for this condemnation" (4).
- The temple demonstrates that judgment has already happened, as an example of what will happen. (5-7)
 - Jesus saved a people out of Egypt and then later destroyed those who did not believe. These were the people who were disobedient in the wilderness, so that God decided to let the entire generation of those who left Egypt die in the desert. The next generation, the children of those who left Egypt, were the ones to enter the promised land. Only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter, because of their faithfulness to God. Everyone else, including Moses, faced God's judgment.
 - Those angels who rebelled out of prides are being kept by God for judgment of

the great day, which is the same day we will receive our reward of full salvation...if we remain faithful to God.

- Sodom and Gomorrah underwent judgment for sexual immorality. This served--and serves--as an example of punishment by eternal fire.
- Three sins are covered in these examples: unbelief, that led to disobedience; pride, that led to rebellion; and sexual immorality, that led to destruction.
 - These three sins are common to all of us. Jude teaches us to beware of those who come into our midst professing Christ and claiming to follow him but are guilty of these sins.
 - Those who claim to have been saved by Jesus but live as though they have no Lord other than themselves.
 - Those who wear their pride on their sleeves.
 - Those who practice sexual immorality, excusing it in whatever form--they are committed to one another; times have changed; homosexuality was different then; and so on.
 - If we fall into these sins, or allow ourselves to be led into these sins by those we follow, we are responsible. Jude wrote this letter to remind us of our faith and to provide examples of the sins we are to avoid.
- This is common knowledge for them. They knew this, but now need to be reminded of it.
(5) This is a sign of their slipping away from the hold Christ has on them.
 - It is good for us to be reminded, but better to hold onto the things we "once fully knew."
- Judgment is anticipated for the false teachers/leaders. (8-16)
 - They rely on dreams for their spiritual authority.
 - They are sexually immoral.
 - They reject authority.
 - They blaspheme spiritual things they do not understand.
 - They are prideful and rebellious.
 - They look good outwardly, but inwardly they are selfish, full of themselves, prideful, self-serving, on their way to bitter gloom and darkness unless they repent. (12-13)
 - They are divisive, worldly, and devoid of the Spirit (16).
 - Their judgment has been prophesied and predicted, first by Enoch (14-17), then by the apostles (17-18).
 - Do not follow people like this.

So how do we avoid this? How do we not fall into the traps set by those who practice Christianity for their own gain?

[4. How must it be contended for?]

We must contend for the faith.

- Contend. The word means "fight." Be active in your faith. Be vigilant. Do not leave this up to the elders, or to the preacher. Know what you believe, by reading the Bible, learning the doctrine of Christ, and strengthening your faith. Encourage and equip others in the faith.
- The faith was delivered once. It is complete and final. It is the gospel, the good news that our salvation is not dependent on us but on God, who fulfilled his mystery, his plan, that began in the Old Testament and carried through to Jesus. Just as Jesus saved a people out of Egypt, he has saved a people out of sin. And just as those people whom Jesus saved out of Egypt were later destroyed because of unbelief and sin, so also we can be destroyed by our own disobedience.
- It was delivered to the saints. Us. The faith is once for all. It is entrusted to us. It doesn't change, and it is for the church to keep, protect, and share.
- It is about God. And Jesus.
 - Jude uses the verb "to keep" a number of times. Each time, except for one, demonstrates God's control of his own plan.
 - In verse 1, we are "kept" by God for Jesus Christ, meaning, when our salvation is being kept by God for the day of Jesus' return.
 - In verse 24, we are reminded that God is the one who keeps us from stumbling and presents us to himself as blameless! If we are able to avoid stumbling in sin, that is, rejecting God through unbelief, pride, or sexual immorality, let us not become prideful in it, but confident in God, who led us through the temptation by keeping us.
 - In verse 6, Jude reminds us that God is also keeping some for judgment--in this case, the angels. But the point is clear: if God is keeping some for this judgment, then judgment for sin and rebellion against God is very real.
- The faith is also about us, in subjection to God.
 - Because, in verse 21, we are taught to keep ourselves in God's love. This does not mean that we are on our own or that we save ourselves. Rather, much like Paul reminded the Philippians to work out their salvation even as God was at work within them, Jude teaches Christian responsibility under God's sovereignty. Ultimately, God saves us, he protect us, he keeps us, and he presents us, but we have responsibilities within that relationship.
 - And the responsibilities are simple:
 - Build yourselves up in the faith (20) through Bible reading, knowledge, and doctrine. Know what you believe, not for knowledge's sake, but to take confidence from the gospel and God's plan.
 - Pray in the Holy Spirit (20). Draw strength, comfort, and encouragement

from God.

- Wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life (21). Remember that Christ will return. Be patient and take a long view to life, not being set back by momentary or temporary problems.
- Have mercy on those who doubt (22). Teach, equip, help, and encourage them along the gospel path.
- Save others from judgment (23). Teach and rebuke those who are in danger of falling away in sin in hopes of breaking through to them.
- To others, show mercy with fear (23). Reach out even to those who have fallen, but with "fear," not becoming entangled with their sin and rebellion.

Jude begins and ends his letter with God's glory and power and action on our behalf. We focus on God's glory and on our Lord Jesus Christ, who keeps us. Daily remembrance through Bible reading and prayer will lead to daily refreshing. Our salvation is secure if our faith is full. The fulfillment of all we can do is only possible through God. He sustains us, protects us, keeps us, and presents us to himself, for his glory. Our salvation is made possible for us by God, but our judgment is our own doing. It is real, and it is promised, for rebellion, sin, and immorality. Let us, therefore, keep close to Christ, just as we are kept for Christ.