

# Danger!

*Jude 1–4 • June 7, 2015*

The tiny epistle of Jude is tucked into the end of our New Testament. It is famous for its hard-hitting charge to “earnestly contend for the faith” and its examples of God’s judgment of false believers. The New Testament promises that false teachers will continually be arising in the church (Acts 20:29–30), and Jude reminds us to be on guard against false teaching, to remember the end of that false teaching, and to persevere in the truth and in godly living.

**The Writer:** Jude identifies himself by name and as a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James (v. 1). It seems likely that he is also the half-brother of Jesus (cf. Matt 13:55). However, he makes no mention of this connection, calling himself instead a servant of Jesus.

**The Readers:** Jude writes to the church at large, not a specific gathering of believers. He writes to those who are called by God and brought to salvation in Christ, which demonstrates God’s great and eternal love for them. This love is manifested in God’s preservation of his own, keeping them as his children in Christ, protecting them from judgment which has already been poured out on Christ. Jude prays that God’s mercy, peace, and love would flow abundantly into and through their lives (v. 2).

**The Warning:** Not only does God love his children, Jude also loves them and while he initially desired to write to them and glory in the gospel they shared, a more pressing need made itself known. Perhaps he hoped to write an epistle like Romans, unpacking the glory of God in justifying sinners and making them his children. However, there was an urgent crisis: false believers had infiltrated the churches.

The danger of false believers falling away from the truth and influencing others forced Jude to write and urge Christians to fight to maintain and obey the truth God had revealed through his apostles in his Word. This revelation was not a shifting, changing set of vague ideas; rather, it was a body of truth that did not and would not change.

These false believers had come in surreptitiously, and were unnoticed. However, Jude describes them as people destined for God’s judgment, ungodly people (one of Jude’s favorite descriptions), and people who twist God’s forgiving grace into a freedom to please themselves. This perversion effectively denies the lordship of Jesus Christ, rather proclaiming themselves their own gods.

*Jesus’ church must constantly fight to conform to the truth God has revealed.*

## Questions to Think About:

What does it mean to be a “servant of Jesus Christ”? How does that correspond to the false believers’ understanding?

What does the “faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” include? What is excluded?

What would the false understanding that “perverts the grace of God into sensuality” sound like?