

**Pepper Road Church of Christ**

***1-3 JOHN AND  
JUDE***

**Truly Knowing God**

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# Lesson 1 – Eliminating Excuses to Sin

## Introduction

### Background

Although the epistle of 1<sup>st</sup> John does not ascribe authorship to John, many writings from the early church attribute the writing to the apostle John and quote from it authoritatively (Polycarp, Papias of Hierapolis, Irenaeus of Lyons, Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius). The writing style is very similar to the gospel of John, such that there is little serious doubt to its authorship.

The writing of the gospel of John and his 3 epistles are usually dated between 90 to 97 A.D., because of its subject matter (Gnosticism) and the absence of mention of Judaism and Roman persecution.

Based on secular history, the epistle is believed by scholars to be directed toward churches of Asia Minor (in and around Ephesus), who were being directly affected by a growing false doctrine.

### Writing Style

John's writing is relatively simplistic in terms of language and outline. However, it boasts a profound depth, continually applying spiritual, metaphysical principles to one's practical actions. John often speaks in extremes (for example, "dark" and "light", "born of God" and "of the Devil"), essentially denying the reality of any lasting middle ground.

### Purpose of Writing

Whereas the gospel of John was written to unbelievers to convert them (**John 20:30:31**), the 1<sup>st</sup> epistle of John was written to believers to answer error and give confidence to their faith (**I John 5:13**). John explicitly states his purposes for writing the epistle of 1 John:

- ***“that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” (I John 1:3-4)***
- ***“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin.” (I John 2:1)***
- ***“These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you.” (I John 2:26)***
- ***“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.” (I John 5:13)***

A cursory scan of the above statements and the epistle will reveal that the apostle John was writing to existing Christians and answering false teachers, who were seeking to excuse willful sin and cast doubt on Christians' salvation. The frequent formula of *“if someone says...”* and *“if we say ...”* indicates that he is frequently anticipating and answering false arguments postulated by some erroneous doctrine. Multiple warnings against deceptive false teaching are sounded. Multiple challenges to maintain fellowship with the apostles and therefore God are also issued. The various tenets of this pernicious false teaching can be inferred by studying 1<sup>st</sup> John; however, secular history reveals what is the most likely object of John's denunciation, Gnosticism.

## Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a false doctrine, which began its ascension to prominence late in the 1<sup>st</sup> century after Judaism and the destruction of Jerusalem faded from the forefront of early 1<sup>st</sup> century doctrinal challenges. The doctrine was both complicated, esoteric, and varied.

Although it is not required to know Gnosticism to understand 1<sup>st</sup> John, understanding a little about the doctrine will greatly accelerate one's grasping the more subtle points of this great epistle. Therefore, with this motivation in mind, the main points of Gnosticism were:

- **Spirit versus Matter Dualism** – All matter is inherently evil; therefore, a spiritual God could not have possibly come to earth in a material (i.e., fleshly) body. Only through a series of proxy gods could the Supreme God interact with the material world.
- **Multi-Layered Cosmos** – The universe is comprised of (at least) 7 dimensional spheres, each under the rule of an *archon* (i.e., demons). Our known universe is the most carnal, least spiritual, and the furthest removed from God's spiritual universe. This universe is essentially a prison, blocking our access to God.
- **Soul versus Spirit** – Man's soul was created by God, but demon forces captured and imprisoned a spirit within man, which desires freedom from this earthly prison, which can only be obtained through a special knowledge (*gnosis*), which awakens and frees this bound spirit.
- **Saving Knowledge** – Salvation is provided through revelation of man's true nature, that he is a container for some sliver of the divine soul. Jesus' provided this special knowledge, which allows man to escape his prison at death and transcend to a higher plane. Furthermore, this knowledge provides moral liberty and focuses man's attention on himself, since he is after all divine. Salvation has no relation to forgiveness or redemption from sins.

The effects of this doctrine not only provided a license to sin, but it also encouraged an arrogant elitism, which was devoid of love for one's brethren. It was also built on the philosophies of men instead of the revelation delivered by Jesus' apostles, and it dramatically perverted the identify of Jesus and goal of Christianity.

Based on the writings of "early church fathers", this doctrine has been associated with the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans" (disciples of Nicolas; see, **Revelation 2:6, 14-16; Acts 6:5**).

Although Gnosticism is not directly advocated today in any large way, the arguments that John answered are alive and well in many of the modern grace-fellowship movements. Therefore, this epistle is especially relevant to us, even if the original application has faded from view.

## Docetism

Closely related to Gnosticism was the idea that Jesus only "seemed" or "appeared" to have manifested himself and suffered. (Docetist is taken from Greek, *dokein*, "to seem".) They believed he was either a phantom, or the true Messiah and Christ only dwelt in the human, Jesus, from the baptism of John up unto but not including his suffering and the cross.

# Bible Reading With Questions

## Our Joyful Link to God – I John 1:1-4

1. What unique characteristic elevated the apostles beyond others, who might have wrote about Jesus?
2. How is Jesus identified by John? How does the origin of Jesus according to John impact the main tenets of Gnosticism?
3. For at least what 2 reasons was it critical for ancient saints (and us) to maintain fellowship with the apostles? How is that fellowship accomplished?

## Implications of Our Fellowship with God – I John 1:5-2:2

4. What is the fundamental attribute of God that determines requirements for our fellowship with God? Other supporting New Testament verses?
5. **Error #1 (1:6):** What is fundamentally wrong with someone continuing in sin, while professing to fellowship God?
6. How does one “*walk in the light*”?
7. How do these requirements apply to sins committed habitually (sins of weakness) or unknowingly (sins of ignorance)?
8. How is fellowship established between Christians? What comes first?

9. **Error #2 (1:8):** What mechanism might the Gnostics have offered as to why they were not accountable for their sins? What popular doctrinal mechanisms are offered today, which eliminate our culpability?
10. What is the only valid mechanism or way provided by God to cleanse ourselves of sin?
11. **Error #3 (1:10):** How is error #2 different than #3? (Hint: Compare and contrast the inspired corrections that answer each one.) How can one deny he has sinned and consequently imply that God is a liar? (See also: **James 4:11-12; Romans 3:1-4.**) Give modern examples of people denying their sinfulness in similar fashion today.
12. Was John trying to discourage these people? What was his reason for saying these things, and what words did he provide so that they would not be discouraged?
13. Define “*propitiation*” as used in 2:2 by John? What does this imply about the impact of Jesus’ death upon God?
14. Was Jesus’ atoning death limited? Did it only provide opportunity for salvation to a predetermined few, or was it intended and made available for all? To which dominant false doctrine does this question and useful proof-text relate?

## References

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- King, Daniel H., Sr., *The Three Epistles of John*, Truth Commentaries; Edited, Mike Willis; Guardian of Truth Foundation; Bowling Green, KY, 2004.
- Jenkins, Ferrell, *Brief Introduction to the Epistles of John*, Florida College Class Notes, 1992.

# Lesson 2 – Empty Loves

## Introduction

As John continues, it becomes clear that he is trying to admonish Christians, who are vulnerable to false teachers, who may have already broken fellowship but yet continued to seek the faithful. John provides several tests to prove whether one knows Christ, loves God, and abides in God. Essential doctrinal points are emphasized, which if denied would immediately identify false teachers and false brethren. Appeals are made to Christians to stand fast, convicted in what had originally saved them and illuminated them. Central to this chapter is a call to examine one's heart and his ultimate love. Multiple vain loves are condemned and warned against.

## Bible Reading With Questions

### Verifying True Knowledge of God – I John 2:3-6

1. What test does John provide for determining if we truly know Christ? Can this test be used to determine if someone else truly knows Christ? How does this apply to modern issues?
2. If we fail this test, how does it reflect upon our love for God? Why does it so reflect?
3. What obligation is assumed by anyone professing to abide in Christ? Failure to meet this obligation would imply what?

### The Light of Love – I John 2:7-11

4. What are the “old” and “new” commandments that John is writing them? What is the “beginning” of the “old commandment”?
5. What is the “darkness” that “is passing away”? What is the “true light” that “is already shining”?

6. Why might it be impossible for someone to *“hate his brother”* and *“abide in the light”*? Why are they inseparable?
  
7. How could loving one’s brother eliminate all *“cause for stumbling in him”*?

### **Reasons to Write – I John 2:12-14**

8. To what 3 groups is John writing and why? Are these physical or spiritual descriptions? How do you know? Summarize and explain the 6 reasons provided by John for writing the letter.

### **Abiding Forever – I John 2:15-17**

9. What 3 reasons does John provide for **not** loving the world? (Some are implied.)

### **Antichrists of the Last Hour – I John 2:18-23**

10. Almost 2 millennia have passed since John stated, *“It is the last hour”*. What did he mean, given that we are all still here?
  
11. Who are the ones who *“went out from us”*? Why did they leave?
  
12. What was the *“anointing from the Holy One”*, which would have helped them all to know? Why did John have to write to them, since they had this knowledge already?



13. Can Christianity spiritually tolerate other religions that acknowledge God, but deny Jesus? Why?

14. Is acknowledging the Son the **only** requirement for having a relationship with the Father? Please explain verse 23.

**Abiding in God – I John 2:24-29**

15. What 2 things did these Christians need to let “*abide*” in them? What would be the result? What does this admonition indicate about the appeal probably made by the false teachers?

16. What is required to have confidence in one’s appearing before God? How is that accomplished?

# Lesson 3 – Born of God

## Introduction

The second chapter closes by introducing the topic of being born of God. Chapter 3 elaborates on this fact, considering 2 primary implications and their application: Purity and Love. As children are like their parents, so we must grow to be like our heavenly Father and His Son, if we hope to spend eternity with Him. This means we must eliminate all sin from our life and lay down our lives for our brethren! The logical necessity and practical application of these 2 absolute characteristics is the object of this chapter and our study questions.

## Bible Reading With Questions

### Pure Children of God – I John 3:1-9

1. What is so special or unusual about being children of God? Why would this prevent the world from understanding us?
2. Will we be **exactly** like Jesus, when He appears? Why or why not?
3. Why would hoping to see Christ and be like Christ at His return motivate us to purify ourselves?
4. If one can sin under the New Covenant, then by implication what must there also be under the New Covenant (also, **Romans 5:13; Romans 3:27; Isaiah 2:3; I Corinthians 9:21**)?
5. How would “*seeing*” and “*knowing*” God prevent us from sinning? If we do sin, does that mean we have never seen or known Him? Please explain.
6. Is there ever any excuse for practicing unrighteousness (i.e., sin, **I John 5:17**)? Whenever we choose to sin, with whom do we align ourselves, and with whom are we fighting against?

7. How does God's Word prevent us from sinning? Does this refer to a heavenly state, or is this possible now? Is knowledge of God's Word **all** that is required? Explain.

### **The Test of Love – I John 3:10-15**

8. How critical is loving one's brother to being a child of God? Why?
9. How does Cain's treatment of his brother, explain how and why the world treats us? If it fails to treat us that way, what does that imply?
10. How is murder equivalent to hating our brother?
11. Can murderers not be forgiven and saved? Explain verse 15.

### **The Application of Love – I John 3:10-23**

12. What is the standard of love? Under what conditions should or should we not lay down our lives for our brethren?
13. What are some subtle ways that we may love or hate our brother?
14. What is the implication of God being "*greater than our heart and knows all things*"?

15. What does having “*confidence toward God*” enable us to do?

16. How does verse 23 represent “*His commandment*”, singular? Are there no other commandments to keep? Are these the only ones that matter?

# Lesson 4 – Loving as God Loves

## Introduction

Chapter 3 ended with the imperative of keeping the commandment of God, which the Spirit revealed, to have confidence before God. The commandment has already been presented, to love our brother. However, this naturally raises the question, “How do I know which Spirit to heed? Which commandment by which spirit must be followed?” Although John has already argued the necessity of love for the Christian in chapter 3 by linking it to the commandment of God, chapter 4 ties love itself to the revealed will and nature of God, explaining why it is an essential commandment to be kept. In many ways, chapter 4 is a defense of the required command presented in chapter 3. The end of chapter 4 will resume with the closing point of chapter 3, having confidence before God.

## Bible Reading With Questions

### Which Commandment? Which Spirit? – I John 3:24-4:6

1. Why is it important to identify which commandments are genuinely from the Lord? What has complicated this process?
2. When John speaks of “*spirits*”, plural, is he speaking of angels and demons or men? How do you know?
3. Is recognition of Jesus Christ coming in the flesh the **only** test of a true spirit from God? Explain.
4. Why do some people fall prey to false teachers, false spirits, or false prophets, and others do not so fall victim?
5. Why are John and the other apostles the *de facto* standard of truth and not the Gnostic apostles or anybody else claiming to have the Spirit?

### **Defending and Defining Love – I John 4:7-11**

6. If one loves his brother, does it necessarily mean that he *“is born of God and knows God”*? Are there other requirements to being born of God and knowing Him?
  
7. Why is love critical to the Christian? Can we be a true Christian without love? Why or why not?
  
8. How is love defined here – at least in part?
  
9. Why should God’s great love for us logically require similar love from us toward each other? Explain the logic of verse 11.

### **Confidently Abiding in God through Love – I John 4:12-18**

10. How is God’s invisibility relevant to John’s definition of love?
  
11. How does *“God abide in us”*?
  
12. What four tests or proofs does John offer so that we may *“know that we abide in Him”*?
  
13. Why and how may we have *“boldness in the day of judgment”*, according to John? Would this same standard provide confidence now?

14. How is it that “*perfect love casts out fear*”? Why would our fear of judgment still indicate an imperfect love?

**Implication of Absent, Easier Love – I John 4:19-20**

15. Is there any possible way to love God, while hating one’s brother?

16. Why is it easier to love our brother than God? Please explain fully.

# Lesson 5 – Confident Knowledge

## Introduction

Still pressing toward a full, joyous confidence in Jesus, salvation, and our eternal life, John finishes his definition and defense of God-defined love by tying it to keeping all of God's commandments. He briefly introduces the critical role of faith in our necessary victory over the world. The various proofs for Jesus identity as "*the Son of God*" and capacity to provide "*eternal life*" are briefly recalled, although detailed more specifically elsewhere (for example, the gospel of John). In addition to the clarion purpose of providing confidence in our salvation, confidence in answered prayers (and unanswered prayers) is provided, as the essential basis of God's answer is explained. Lastly, John reminds his readers again of the proper behavior of God's children, how to overcome sin, and motivation for escaping the dark domain of sins' slaves. In closing, the need and means for truly knowing the true God are again recalled, while vain attempts to redefine God are figuratively but flatly rebuked.

## Bible Reading With Questions

### Identifying Love – I John 4:21-5:5

1. What new reason does John introduce for loving our brother?
2. How is love defined in this context? How does this relate to those, who claim we should not judge, condemn, or sever fellowship with others, since that hurts people's feelings, and "*love does no harm*" (**Romans 13:10**)? Can we interpret God's law in terms of **our** understanding of love?
3. Provide some examples of when we might **feel** that God's laws are indeed "*burdensome*", in spite of **I John 5:3**?
4. What new critical component does John reveal for us to "*overcome the world*"? Explain its relationship to the other critical components described previously (**2:14; 3:3-9**).



### The Witness of Jesus – I John 5:6-13

5. How did Jesus come “by water **and** blood”? To what is this referring?
  
6. How should we understand John’s statement, “*the Spirit is truth*” (5:6)? Does this indicate that the Holy Spirit is really a personification of God’s Word and not a person, since He is described as “*is truth*” and not “*is true*” or “*speaks the truth*” (see, **John 17:17**)?
  
7. How does the Spirit bear witness of the truth concerning Jesus? How does God bear witness of His Son?
  
8. Assuming the oldest manuscripts and many scholars are correct in believing that much of **I John 5:7-8** are not part of the original inspired text, explain Jesus statement that “*the Scriptures cannot be broken*” (**John 10:35**).
  
9. Please summarize previous passages from **I John**: What **all**, according to John, is required to have “*eternal life*”?
  
10. How is John’s purpose for writing this epistle different than his reason for writing the gospel of John (**John 20:30-31**)?

### Confidence in Answered Prayers – I John 5:14-17

11. What are the requirements for having confidence in answered prayers, here according to John? (Compare to **3:22**.)

12. How can some sins lead to death, while other sins do not? Are not the “*wages of sin death*” – all sin, not just some sins (**Romans 6:23; James 2:10**)? Are there some sins that do not separate us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**)?

13. Why can we **not** have confidence in praying for people guilty of “*sins to death*”?

### **Knowing the True God – I John 5:14-17**

14. Please summarize previous passages from **I John** and include points from here: How do we overcome and avoid sin?

15. What excuses do we have for tolerating sin in our lives?

16. How should we expect “*the world*” to behave and why?

17. How can we truly (i.e., rightly and confidently) know the “*true God*”? List points previously established by John’s conclusion here.

18. What was the end result of Gnosticism’s misguided attempt to know God? Likewise, what will be the end of every other false doctrine that perverts the nature of God and so blasphemes Him?

# Lesson 6 – Abide in the Truth

## Introduction

### Author and Recipients

Although the epistle of 2<sup>nd</sup> John does not ascribe authorship to John, the writing style, vocabulary, and points are so similar that there is little serious doubt to its authorship. It was written by the same Apostle John, who also wrote the gospel of John and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> epistles of John.

Although the “*elect lady and her children*” are the stated recipients of this 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle, their identity is otherwise unknown. There is some question as to whether she is a literal Christian with physical children, or if she represents a specific congregation with her individual members. Dan King, quoting Donald Guthrie (*New Testament Introduction*, p. 891-892), presents at least the following problems to accepting that this refers to a specific female Christian:

1. She is loved by “*all those who have known the truth*”, which is easier to accept if she represents a church rather than a single person.
2. Neither the lady nor any of her children are named specifically, which suggests lack of individual identity.
3. The subject applies to broader matters, not those specific to a family.
4. The group, second person plural, is referenced more often than the singular, suggesting a group identity and application.
5. The church is personified as a lady elsewhere in the New Testament (**Ephesians 5:29; II Corinthians 11:2; I Peter 5:13**).
6. It is more natural that one church would send greetings to another church by John than one sister to another (verse 13).

Each of these provides greater weight that the “*elect lady and her children*” most **likely** refers to a congregation, but these points rest in probability, and their conclusion is therefore ultimately uncertain.

### Date

According to Dan King and other commentators, the 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle of John would have been written shortly after A.D. 96, after the death of Domitian. Presumably, the gospel of John was written first, then Revelation was written while John was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos in A.D. 94-96, and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> John would have been written shortly after his return after A.D. 96. Given the similarity to 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John, they were all likely written close together.

### Purpose of Writing

Much like 1<sup>st</sup> John, 2<sup>nd</sup> John touches on the doctrine of Gnosticism, except it deals with the doctrine from the value of truth and the necessity of maintaining purity in support of Jesus’ doctrine, not false doctrines, specifically those that deny that Jesus was Christ and came in the flesh. The recipients – as well as us – were to take great care to maintain the joyous bond of truth and avoid extending support to deceivers and false teachers, who would destroy the foundation of that bond. Although brief, the practical import of this epistle, especially on the topics of fellowship and heresy in general, is of paramount relevance today.

## Bible Reading With Questions

### Bond of Truth – II John 1-3

1. Is it important to identify the “*elect lady and her children*”?
2. Why was John – and others – so fond of this family? What changes might we need to make in comparing their bond to our relationships today?
3. How can one expect to receive the blessings of “*grace, mercy, and peace*”? What restrictions or boundaries are placed by this verse on our access to these blessings?

### Walking in Truth – II John 4-6

4. What are the things that provide you great joy? What did John find that caused him to “*rejoice greatly*”? Would it provoke the same reaction in you? Why not? How do we develop such a genuine reaction?
5. What is the command that was of principal concern to John in this letter?
6. What is a principal exhibition and defining characteristic of love according to John?
7. How does one “*walk in truth*”? How does this help us understand how to “*worship ... in truth*” (**John 4:23-24**)?

## Enforcing the Bond of Truth – II John 7-11

8. Why were the “*elect lady and her children*” in danger and needed to take care? Could they not take care of themselves without John interjecting?
  
9. How do you reconcile John’s warning for diligence, lest they lose the “*reward*” for which they had “*worked*”, with statements that we are saved by grace (**Ephesians 2:8-9**)?
  
10. In this context, does the “*doctrine of Christ*” refer to the teaching that Jesus is the Christ and came in the flesh, or does it refer to that which Jesus taught? Does this distinction matter?
  
11. How can “*greeting him*” make one “*share in his evil deeds*”?
  
12. To whom does this rule of fellowship apply? Only when the church of which I am a member withdraws from someone? Does it apply to individuals? What about between family members?

## Path to Full Joy – II John 12-13

13. Is John implying that “*paper and ink*” are an inherently limited form of communication and therefore unable to provide “*full joy*”?

# Lesson 7 – Imitate Good

## Introduction

### Author and Recipients

Much like the 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle of John, the 3<sup>rd</sup> epistle does not ascribe authorship to John. He refers to himself only as “*the elder*”, just as in 2<sup>nd</sup> John. Likewise, the writing style, vocabulary, and points are again so similar that there is little serious doubt to its authorship.

Although addressed to Gaius, Gaius was a common Roman name, and there are other people named Gaius, who appear in the New Testament record (**Acts 19:29; 20:40; I Corinthians 1:14; Romans 16:23**). Given the lack of further specific information beyond his evident stand for the truth and manifest hospitality, there is no way to identify which if any of these people may have been the original recipient of this epistle.

### Purpose of Writing

Although 3<sup>rd</sup> John does not address the conclusion of false doctrines such as Gnosticism, it does deal with issues often related, although not exclusively: Personally continuing to obey the truth, faithful gospel preachers in need of support, carnally minded brethren dividing the church, and the crisis of conscience faced by each man to imitate what is good or evil. Therefore, it continues to serve as relevant instruction, regardless of the exact crisis facing a church and its members.

## Bible Reading With Questions

### Greatest Joy – III John 1-4

1. How did John feel towards Gaius? What was the basis of this feeling?
2. What was John’s “*greatest joy*”? Why might this have given him such great joy? How does this compare to **our** greatest joy?

### Sponsoring Truth – III John 5-8

3. To whom was Gaius showing love: Christians, non-Christians, a sub-set of Christians, or someone else? How was Gaius showing love toward these people?

4. How can such effort make us *“fellow workers for the truth”* (vs. 8)?

### **Imitating Not Evil, But Good – III John 9-12**

5. How can we determine if we have the same heart problem as Diotrephes?
6. Does a local church’s acceptance of a Christian always represent the Lord’s acceptance? What lessons can we learn from this example?
7. How does verse 11 connect verses 9-10 to verse 12? If John’s observation seems obvious, then why would he say it?
8. Ultimately, who are the sources of all *“imitative”* behavior?
9. How does the *“the truth itself ... bear witness”* of someone?

### **Path to Full Joy – III John 13-14**

10. What would be the significance or value of *“greeting the friends by name”*?

# Lesson 8 – Contend Earnestly for the Faith

## Introduction

### Author, Date, and Recipients

The short epistle of Jude is generally ascribed to the brother of Jesus (**Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3**), based on Jude's association with James (vs. 1) and separation from the apostles (vs. 17) (Hamilton, 380).

Most scholars approximate the time of writing for Jude's epistle to be broadly between A.D. 70 to 90 based on its topic. Roman persecution is not mentioned, so that would likely eliminate later dates. Jewish persecution or related complications are not mentioned, so that would likely eliminate earlier dates before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Hamilton, 383-384).

Jude does not specify the recipients of his letter, except he refers to them as "*called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ*", which would be applicable to all New Testament Christians. He does use many Old Testament characters as illustrations and explanations for modern decadent behavior, which might suggest either a Jewish audience or just well-studied and mature Gentile Christians. The wanton behavior of these false teachers may suggest an outside libertine, Gentile influence. Otherwise, there is little contextual or historical information to narrow the original recipients.

### Purpose of Writing

Although Jude seems more similar to Peter's 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle (chapter 2), in that he addresses present false teachers with language similar to Peter's forewarning, it does seem to address practical results similar to John's 3 epistles – wanton lawlessness and denial of Jesus' Lordship (vss. 4, 8, 10, 12, 16, 18-19).

Justified, excused sin is generally the result of false doctrines, so although the specific error may not have been mentioned by Jude, the result of the doctrine, the means of the false teachers, and the motivation of error's adherents is generally applicable. Therefore, we would all be wise to wake up and realize the seriousness of all error, the ungodly motivations and methods of its proponents, and the continual need to "*contend earnestly for the faith*".

## Bible Reading With Questions

### Greeting – Jude 1-2

1. If Jude (same Greek Word as, Judas) was the brother of James and therefore Jesus (**Matthew 13:55**), why might he not identify himself as Jesus' brother, since that would be seemingly more relevant, specific, and clear?



## Contending Earnestly For the Faith – Jude 3-4

2. How does one “*contend earnestly for the faith*”? What does this command mean for us?
  
3. Why did Jude not write about the topic he originally intended? What can we learn about choosing topics to teach, preach, and study from his example?
  
4. How were these false teachers “*long ago ... marked out for this condemnation*”? Does this mean they were doomed before they were born (i.e., Calvin’s double foreordination)?
  
5. How can someone “*turn the grace of God into lewdness*”? What can we learn about the nature of the error being then taught from this phrase? Is this being likewise done today? If so, how?

## Examples Written For Our Admonition – Jude 5-11

6. How were these false teachers similar to Israelites who left Egypt, rebellious angels, and homosexuals from Sodom and Gomorrah? (In other words, identify and explain the exact parallels summarized in verse 8.)
  
7. If the people of Sodom and Gomorrah “*suffered the vengeance of eternal fire*”, when they were destroyed by God raining fire on them, would that not suggest that “*eternal fire*” is temporary – not really eternal – since they died relatively quickly (**Genesis 19:24-25**)?

8. If ever there was someone worthy of receiving a “*reviling accusation*”, it would seem to be the Devil, and yet, even “*Michael the archangel*” was unwilling to rail on him in such a way. What would have been wrong for him to do that? What can we learn from his example and Jude’s observation?
  
9. Please explain how these false teachers and their disciples were “*like brute beasts*”.
  
10. How were these sinners like Cain, Balaam, and Korah?

### **Sure Judgment – Jude 12-19**

11. Does verse 12 and its reference to “*love feasts*” authorize modern fellowship meals, sponsored by the church?
  
12. What was the significance and condemnation of these false teachers “*feasting with you without fear*”?
  
13. What is the meaning of Jude’s parallel to clouds, trees, waves, and stars? How were these false disciples like these things?
  
14. What is the main point of Enoch’s prophesy and how does it relate to Jude’s point at this point in the context?

15. What tools did these false teachers use to obtain what they wanted? What did they want? How does this foreknowledge help us?

**Bolster the Standing, Rescue the Fallen – Jude 20-25**

16. Looking at Jude's prescription for steadfastness, how does one "*pray in the Holy Spirit*"? How might this contrast with preceding statements about these apostates?

17. What 3 virtues are required to hopefully save those influenced by these false teachers?

18. Must someone cultivate a relationship with someone else before they can offer correction? What does Jude say? How do we harmonize this with Jesus' demeanor described in **Matthew 12:20**?

19. According to Jude, why is God worthy of the praise found in the **doxology**, which closes this epistle? What effect should this have upon us?