

PREPARATION FOR LESSON: Read the books of 2 John, 3 John, Jude

BACKGROUND

John is writing to both a Jewish widow, Kyria and the church, which meets in her home. Because no pastor or elder is mentioned, it appears the group does not have a regular teacher. Instead, they depend on traveling teachers. John addresses the lady (*you singular*) in vss. 4, 5 and 13 and the church members (*you plural*) in vss. 6-12.

John wrote his first letter to Jewish believers in home churches, scattered thruout the province of Asia. He described a common faith they had with him, with traveling teachers and with believers. This common faith required 3 basics - agreement about Jesus, about sin and how to treat other believers. Sometime later that same year, John learns one church is accepting traveling teachers that do not meet the requirements.

John reminds them they should never accept a teacher that denies either the humanity or deity of Jesus. There had been spiritual growth in the lives of these believers. Listening to false teaching puts them in danger of losing their spiritual growth and their spiritual rewards. Teachers who continually insist on going beyond Scripture to teach their own ideas about Jesus are not believers.

If a teacher denies Jesus' deity or humanity, the lady and the church should stop inviting him into the house to teach. They should not financially help him and should stop giving him the church greeting, *May God's grace be with you and your teaching*. False teaching about Jesus is from Satan - those who support false teaching are partners in Satan's work.

This book is written about 90 AD. from Ephesus together with 3 John.

THEME Jewish believers and their faith in common: whom to exclude as teachers - those who deny the basics about Jesus.

OUTLINE

Jewish Believers

- Remember the truth about Jesus vss. 1-6
- Know what the teachers believe vss. 7-9
- Exclude false teachers from the church vss. 10-13

BACKGROUND

John sends a thank-you note to Gaius, one of his converts. Teachers from John's church had come to Gaius' town. He did not know them. But when he found they believed the truth about Jesus, he invited them to stay in his home. The pastor Diotrefes refused to let these teachers speak in his church. He expelled everyone from the church who helped or accepted them. This means Gaius had been expelled. John is letting Gaius know he is aware of the situation. Since Diotrefes ignored John's private letter and is publicly talking against him, John may soon come to publicly deal with him. Demetrius, who is bringing the letter is another teacher from John's church. He believes the truth about Jesus, so Gaius can invite him to stay in his house and also ask him to teach.

In these 2 letters, John is saying they should **exclude** teachers who deny either the humanity or deity of Jesus and they should **include** teachers who do accept these basics.

THEME Jewish believers and their faith in common: whom to include as teachers - those who believe the basics about Jesus.

OUTLINE

- Gaius, the church member vss. 1-8
- Diotrefes, the church pastor vss. 9-10
- Demetrius, the one bringing the letter vss. 11-15

SUMMARY John's 3 letters to Jewish believers in Asia province are about their faith in common.

In 1 John: he gives the basics of their common faith: agreement about Jesus, about sin and how to treat other believers. Do the teachers believe Jesus is true humanity, true deity and Savior who made payment for sin?

In 2 John: he tells a church they should exclude teachers who deny the humanity or deity of Jesus.

In 3 John: he tells a church they should include teachers who believe in the humanity and deity of Jesus.



BACKGROUND

Jude, brother of James and blood relative of Jesus, had been carefully preparing to write about the salvation he and his readers had in common. But then the Holy Spirit gave him an urgency to write about protecting the Gospel message. False teachers have been slipping into church leadership and saying, *God's grace gives them the right to make their own decisions about sexual issues. Jesus was not the promised Messiah, not deity and does not have authority to tell them what to do.*

Jude is writing Jewish believers in northern Asia Minor, the same people Peter had written to, some 10 years earlier. His style and content are totally Jewish. In fact, he quotes from 2 books that were part of Jewish religious literature, but never equal to Scripture. (*Book of Enoch* and *Assumption of Moses*). Jews read them as part of their cultural history. Some parts were true, while other parts were Jewish legends. Jude refers to facts that were true to give his Jewish readers examples they could relate to. He mentions an argument between Satan and Michael, the archangel, about the body of Moses. Jude also quotes predictions of Enoch - when Jesus returns to set up His kingdom, He will come with His saints and will judge all the wicked. This would include the false teachers in his day.

The date is the late 70s AD. In 68 AD, Peter had said false teachers and scoffers *would* come. Jude says they *did* come and are *now* creating division in their churches. It would take several years for these changes to take place, so it is reasonable to put it some 10 years after Peter's letter.

THEME Responsibility of Jewish believers: protect and defend the Gospel message

DEVELOPED OUTLINE

Protect the Gospel Message - Why? Because of the false teachers. vss. 1-16

Their teachings: they deny the deity and authority of Jesus and use God's grace as an opportunity for immorality. 1-4

Their judgment: for unrestrained immorality as 3 Old Testament examples were judged for immorality. 5-7

Their attitude: they reject God's authority because of envy, greed and pride like Cain, Balaam and Korah. 8-11

Their character: they are clouds without water; trees without fruit. 12-16

This is picture language to say people who are seeking God are left spiritually hungry and thirsty.

The false teachers are destructive, false guides, grumblers and braggarts.

Protect the Gospel Message - How?

With discernment of their spiritual teachers 17-19

Know the beliefs of anyone who teaches in their house churches.

With discernment in their personal lives - Keep on doing what God says... 20-21 (Keep in God's love)

Building up a knowledge of God's Word by asking the Holy Spirit for discernment.

Anxiously awaiting the return of Jesus at any time.

Before they can protect the Gospel message in the church, they must first protect it in their lives.

With discernment of other believers 22-23

Patently instruct those who doubt; help those who want to escape immorality, but set boundaries.

Depend on God's power 24-25

In the present, He can keep them from falling into wrong belief or wrong behavior.

In the future, He will present them without fault and with great joy to the Father.

APPLICATION

The Problem

A whole new set of leaders and teachers are emerging in our culture with a variety of false ideas. They are writing hundreds of books and teaching in churches, universities and seminaries. They especially appeal to the 20-40 age group. Most believers have no idea how much of their beliefs have crept into our churches.



APPLICATION *continued*

The False Teaching

- > *Teaching God's Word based on the original languages, defending the faith, saying there is a right and wrong and Jesus is the only way, is harmful in today's church.*
A Generous Orthodoxy, Brian McLaren review in Emergent Church - Theopedia, 7 pages
- > *Those who believe the Bible are abnormal... We as Christians must be accepted by non-Christians. This means we must change the way we live.* Dan Kimball, author of: *They Like Jesus, But Not the Church* ('06)
 He means we must live like the world so the world will accept our message.
- > *...human nature is fallen but redeemed, flawed but in essence good.* Brennan Manning, *Signature of Jesus*, pg. 125
 If people were basically good, we would not need Jesus as Savior.

So-called *Christian* books and novels are teaching...

There are no absolutes. Truth is whatever you think it is or what you want it to be.
 By learning special methods of speaking or breathing - you can experience God on deeper levels.
 Everyone will be in heaven - there is no eternal separation from God.
 The death of Jesus was not payment for sin - it was only an example of God's love.
 The goal of believers is to change the world and create God's kingdom on earth right now.
 God has no future plans for the Jewish people and their nation.

Note: These are all **false** teachings.

The Way to Protect the Gospel Message

Have discernment about our spiritual teachers.

Know what is being taught about Jesus, about sin and our need for the payment of Jesus.

Encourage and pray for our pastors that they will be faithful to God's Word.

Stop listening to those who are giving false teaching.

Have discernment in our lives: to know what we believe and why; obey what God shows us to do.

Have discernment of other believers - to provide answers for their doubts; to help them when they go astray.

Depend on God's power and keep building up our knowledge of His Word.

When we see others turning away from God's Word, our first reaction is to want to change them. But we can only change ourselves. Our first responsibility is to make sure we keep learning and listening to the Holy Spirit, and obeying what He shows us to do.

As a result, Jesus is able to keep **us** from falling into wrong belief or wrong behavior.

If we do fall, but then admit our wrong and ask forgiveness, we will be forgiven.

We can also be sure that in the future, Jesus will present us to God the Father without fault and with joy greater than we have ever known. What a promise!

The Final Answer

As conditions around us get worse, we will get discouraged and feel overwhelmed. So Jude gives us the bigger picture.

Glory, majesty, power and authority belong to God our Savior. This has been revealed to us thru Jesus Christ our Lord. God the Father had these qualities before time began; He has them now and He will have them forever. (literally – for all ages) 1:25 paraphrased from the Greek

In other words, **God is God and He is in control!** In this we can rest.

