

- **I. Jude has been called by one commentator "the difficult and neglected letter."**
- A. For most of us, reading Jude is a bewildering rather than a profitable task.
  - 1. Jude is largely unknown by most and seldom read, preached upon, or taught.
  - 2. Why? Perhaps Jude is overlooked because of its brevity, but more likely it is neglected because of its strangeness.
- B. Is Jude relevant? Yes, very.
  - 1. We are all very familiar with the Acts of the Apostles. It has been suggested that Jude should be called the Acts of the Apostates.
  - 2. Jude's letter reminds us that false teaching and immoral living generally go together and that both have dire consequences.
    - a. Jude was written so that believers would contend for the faith at a crucial time in the life of the church.
    - b. Jude's short book is a wake up call. It is a spiritual alarm clock.
    - c. Moffatt calls Jude "a fiery cross to rouse the churches."
    - d. As Barclay observes, "beyond a doubt it would hit those who read it for the first time like a hammer-blow. It would be like a trumpet call to defend the faith."
  - 3. When we understand Jude and understand the situation against which it was written, the letter is suddenly filled with great relevance for us today.

- 4. Barclay: "There have indeed been times in the history of the church ... when Jude was not far from being the most relevant book in the New Testament."
- 5. And we may be living in such a time today. We are certainly living in a time when we all need to heed Jude's command to defend the faith because it is under attack from within and without.
- **II. Jude targets a specific group of heretics. Who were they?**
  - A. Jude never tell us directly.
    - 1. Jude does not give us a detailed portrait, but instead he compares them to notorious sinners from the Old Testament.
    - 2. It is sometimes said that Jude denounced his opponents, but did not refute them. But that statement overlooks the great accomplishment of this short letter.
      - a. Jude exposed the moral rootlessness and utter godlessness of the heretics in 25 short verses. By revealing their character, Jude stripped them of any authority in the congregation.
      - b. "Jude did not merely revile them, he unveiled them."
  - B. What are these heretics like?
    - 1. Here is what Jude tells us:
      - a. They are like Cain, the cynical, selfish murderer.
      - b. They are like Balaam, whose one desire was for gain and who led the people into sin.
      - c. They are like Korah, who rebelled against the legitimate authority of Moses and was swallowed up by the earth for his arrogant disobedience.
      - d. They are like the hidden rocks on which a ship may founder.

- e. They have their own clique in which they associate only with people like themselves, and thus destroy Christian fellowship.
  - f. They deceive others with their promises, like clouds that promise rain and then pass over the sky.
  - g. They are like fruitless and rootless trees that have no harvest of good fruit.
  - h. As the foaming spray of the waves casts the sea weed and the wreckage on the beaches, they foam out shameless deeds.
  - i. They are like disobedient stars who refuse to keep their appointed orbit and are doomed to the dark.
  - j. They were described long ago by the prophet Enoch, who prophesied their divine destruction.
  - k. They murmur against all true authority and discipline as the children of Israel murmured against Moses in the desert.
  - l. They are discontented with the lot that God has appointed to them.
  - m. Their lusts are their dictators; their speech is arrogant and proud; they follow after the great for the sake of gain.
- 2. Not a very flattering portrait!
- C. So, we know what they were like, but who were they?
    - 1. We know they came from outside because Jude says they secretly slipped in among you in verse 4. So they can rightly be called intruders or infiltrators.
    - 2. Their most remarkable feature was their libertinism and Jude's favorite designation for them is godless.

- a. But they were not merely libertines. They were also heretics in doctrine, denying Christ.
- b. Even today, these problems often come together: those who think loosely tend to live loosely, and vice versa.
- D. From the text itself we can deduce some clues about the identity of these heretics. First, they were antinomians.
  - 1. The word "Antinomian" in Greek means "against law." Antinomianism has been called the polar opposite of legalism.
  - 2. Antinomians are people who pervert grace.
    - a. Their position is that since the law is dead and they are under grace, they can do absolutely anything they want.
    - b. Grace is supreme; it can forgive any sin; the more we sin, the more the opportunities for grace to abound. (Paul dealt with this view in Romans 6.)
    - c. They say that the body is of no importance; what matters is the inward heart of man.
    - d. They say that all things belong to Christ, and, therefore, all things are theirs. And so for them nothing is forbidden.
  - 3. Likewise, Jude's heretics turn the grace of God into an excuse for flagrant immorality.
    - a. They practice shameless unnatural vices, as the people of Sodom did.
    - b. They defile the flesh and think it is no sin.
    - c. They allow their brute instinct to rule their lives.
  - 4. Barclay provides some modern examples of this ancient heresy.

- a. It appeared in the Ranters of the seventeenth century.
- b. One Ranter wrote: "It is not safe to go to the Bible to see what others have spoken and written of the mind of God as to see what God speaks within me, and to follow the doctrine and leading of it in me."
- c. Barclay: "Jude's heretics have existed in every Christian generation and, even if they do not go all the way, there are still many who in their heart of hearts trade upon God's forgiveness and make his grace an excuse to sin."
  
- E. In addition to being Antinomians, these heretics denied Jesus Christ.
  - 1. The use of the word "only" in Jude is significant.
  - 2. If Jude talks about our only Master and Lord and about the only God, it is natural to assume that there must have been those who questioned the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and of God.
  - 3. Can we trace any such line of thought in the early church? Yes, this clue points us toward the Gnostics.
  
- F. What is Gnosticism?
  - 1. The word Gnosticism comes from the Greek word gnosis, which means knowledge.
  - 2. The Gnostics believed they had a special kind of revealed knowledge without which no one could be saved.
  
- G. What is the history of Gnosticism?
  - 1. We should note out the outset that "Gnosticism" is a broad term. It includes a wide variety of religious views and movements that arose in the first several centuries AD.

- 2. The sources of Gnosticism are difficult to trace, but it appears to be a blending of Hellenism with religious ideas from the Jews, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians.
- 3. Some of the most significant early Gnostic systems have Jewish roots.
  - a. Rabbinical texts suggest that during the time between the Testaments, many Jews came to doubt the cardinal attributes of God: his omnipotence, his omniscience, and his providence.
  - b. This departure continued into the first century, and greatly increased after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 when these ideas were reinforced in the minds of many Jews, whose faith was shaken in God and in his promises. (Again, Paul dealt with similar objections in Romans.)
    - 1) As I prepared these notes I was struck by how many of the false Gnostic beliefs were addressed by Paul in Romans. That link would make for an interesting study.
  - c. A would be Gnostic searching for security in a troubled and evil world could hardly ignore the message of Christianity. The Gnostic might claim that just as he knew the true meaning of the Old Testament, so he and he alone knew the true meaning of Jesus.
  - d. It seems there was an influx of Jewish Gnostics into the church after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and that most likely was the problem that Jude was addressing.
- H. What did the Gnostics believe?
  - 1. To many Gnostics, the possession of their special knowledge made ethics irrelevant since their salvation depended not on what they did but on what they knew. Thus, Gnostics were often very immoral.

- 2. Gnosticism was based on the notion that we live in a dualistic universe.
  - a. From the beginning of time there had always been spirit and matter. Spirit was essentially good; matter was essentially evil.
  - b. Out of this flawed matter the world was created. But God is pure spirit and, therefore, could not possibly handle this essentially evil matter.
  - c. So if matter is evil, then how was the universe created?
    - 1) God put out a series of aeons or emanations; each of these aeons was farther away from him.
    - 2) At the end of this long chain, remote from God, there was an aeon who was able to touch matter; and it was this aeon, this distant and secondary god, who actually created the world.
    - 3) As the aeons in the series grew more distant from God, they grew more ignorant of him; and also grew more hostile to him.
    - 4) The creating aeon, at the end of the series, was totally ignorant of and totally hostile to God.
    - 5) The Gnostics identified the true God with the God of the New Testament and they identified the secondary, ignorant and hostile god with the God of the Old Testament.
- I. This Gnostic line of thought had one curious but perfectly logical result.
  - 1. If the God of the Old Testament was ignorant of and hostile to the true God, it must follow that the people whom that ignorant God hurt were in fact good people. Clearly the hostile God would be hostile to the people who were the true servants of the true God.

- 2. The Gnostics, therefore turned the Old Testament upside down and regarded its heroes as villains and its villains as heroes.
- 3. There was a sect of these Gnostics called Ophites, because they worshipped the serpent of Eden. They regarded Cain and Korah and Balaam as great heroes.
- 4. I don't think it is a coincidence that it is these very people from the Old Testament whom Jude uses as tragic and terrible examples of sin.
- J. The heretics in Jude also seem to have denied the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. How does that fit in with Gnosticism?
  - 1. We have seen that, according to Gnostic belief, God put out a series of aeons between himself and the world. The Gnostics regarded Jesus Christ as one of these aeons.
  - 2. They did not regard Jesus as our only Master and Lord; instead they said that Jesus was only one among the many links between God and man, although he might be the highest and the closest of all.
- K. As we will see in a moment, Jude appears to some to quote apocryphal books. There is some disagreement on that issue, but all must agree that Jude quotes a prophecy from Enoch that appears nowhere in the Old Testament. How does that fit in with Gnosticism?
  - 1. The Gnostics made extensive use of the apocryphal literature.
  - 2. Origen suggests that one particular Gnostic doctrine came from the book of Enoch.
  - 3. If these Gnostic heretics relied on the uninspired book of Enoch to support their beliefs, then again it is no coincidence that Jude quotes

a prophecy from Enoch and tells them that it relates to their own judgment and destruction.

- L. There is still one other hint about these heretics in Jude: in verse 19 Jude describes them as “these who set up divisions.”
- 1. We have seen that the Gnostics believed that between man and God there stretched an infinite series of aeons.
- 2. The aim of man must be to achieve contact with God. To obtain this his soul must traverse this infinite series of links between God and man.
- 3. The Gnostics held that to achieve this a very special and esoteric knowledge was required. So deep was this knowledge that only very few could attain to it.
- 4. The Gnostics, therefore, divided men into two classes.
  - a. The first class were those whose spirits were so highly developed and intellectual that they were able to climb the long ladder and reach God.
    - 1) These people, the Gnostics claimed, were so spiritually and intellectually equipped that they could become as good as Jesus.
    - 2) Irenaeus says that some of them believed that they could become better than Jesus and attain direct union with God.
  - b. The other class were ordinary people.
    - 1) They had physical life but their spirit was undeveloped and they were incapable of ever gaining the intellectual wisdom which would enable them to climb the long road to God.
    - 2) Those in the first class were a very small and select minority; the second class were the vast majority of ordinary people.

- c. Barclay: "It is clear to see that this kind of belief was inevitably productive of spiritual snobbery and pride. It introduced into the church the worst kind of class distinction."
- M. There is far from universal agreement that the heretics in Jude were gnostics, but in my opinion they provide the best fit to the evidence we have.
- **III. Does Jude belong in the New Testament?**
  - A. As with James, some have questioned Jude's inclusion in the New Testament. And as with James, our reply is much the same: God has providentially assembled and preserved the Bible that we have today, and Jude belongs there, as do all of the other books.
  - B. Jude is included in the Muratorian Canon, which dates to about A. D. 170, and may be regarded as the first semi-official list of the books.
  - C. In the middle of the third century Origen knew and used it, but he was well aware that there were many who questioned its right to be scripture. Eusebius placed Jude among the books that were disputed.
  - D. Jerome, who produced the Vulgate, had his doubts about Jude; and it is in him that we find one of the reasons for the hesitation that was felt towards it - Jude appears to quote from apocryphal books and rely upon them as authorities.
    - 1. The word "Apocrypha" in Greek means that which has been hidden away, and it refers to religious writings, most of which appeared in the period between the testaments, that are not part of the Bible.
    - 2. Many say that Jude quotes such books, and this they argue should make us question Jude's authenticity.
      - a. But, as an aside, even if Jude did quote such sources, wouldn't that point toward its authenticity rather than the opposite? Why would

an author making use of Jude's name to create an appearance of authenticity then turn around and rely on books outside the canon of Scripture?

- 3. Here are the two most often cited examples.
  - a. Some argue that the reference in verse 9 to Michael disputing with the devil about the body of Moses is taken from an apocryphal book called "The Assumption of Moses."
  - b. Some argue that Jude's quotation in verses 14 and 15 is taken from the Book of Enoch, which, they argue, Jude appears to regard as scripture.
  - c. And we are told that Jude is not alone in this. Paul, for example, in 2 Timothy 3:8 tells us the names Jannes and Jambres of the magicians who defied Moses before Pharoah. Those names are not found in the Old Testament, but are found in other Jewish writings.
- 4. One commentator writes: "We have no right to assume that inspiration raises a writer to the intellectual position of a critical historian. Jude probably believed the story about the dispute between Michael and Satan. But even if he knew it to be a myth, he might readily use it as an illustrative argument seeing that it was so familiar to his readers."
  - a. That view is ridiculous. Inspiration is inerrant or it is not inspiration. The spirit of truth cannot breathe out falsehood!
- E. Let's begin by looking at the books that Jude supposedly quoted.
  - 1. Fragments of the Book of Enoch were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was lost for 15 centuries until it was rediscovered. An English translation appeared in 1821.

- 2. The Book of Enoch is very strange. It describes heavenly visions, journeys through fantastic mountain ranges to see the fiery pit where evil angels burn, the last judgment before the great throne, and the movements of the sun and stars.
- 3. The Book of Enoch was not written at one time, but rather it contains a number of different writings written at various times.
- 4. The book of Enoch is divided into five sections: the Book of the Watchers, the Similitudes, the Astronomy book, the Book of Dreams, and the Epistle of Enoch.
  - a. The first section, the Book of the Watchers, takes its name from the Watchers, who were the angels who came to earth and corrupted it.
  - b. Enoch is assigned to take to these fallen angels the message of their judgment. The fallen angels ask Enoch to intercede for them and Enoch is then caught up into heaven in a vision of God.
  - c. In that vision, Enoch learns there is to be no mercy for the fallen angels. The remainder of that book describes Enoch's heavenly journeys.
- 5. As for the other book, the Assumption of Moses, we know very little. It exists only in fragments today, although it is quoted in some early sources.
- F. Did Jude quote from the Assumption of Moses and the Book of Enoch?
  - 1. I agree with Lenski: "It is taking a good deal for granted when we are told that Jude 14, 15 quote the book of Enoch. Jude quotes only Enoch and does not say that he quotes any book or writing." (And the same could be said about the Assumption of Moses.)

- 2. The fact that Jude adds the words "seventh from Adam" in describing Enoch argues against his use of the book of Enoch, and certainly does not sound as if Jude's readers were expected to have the book of Enoch and to know its contents.
- 3. Plus, as one commentator notes, the variations between Jude's epistle and the book of Enoch are not inconsiderable.
- G. In any event, the main question for us is whether what Jude says here is true.
  - 1. And the answer is yes, of course it is true. It is inspired by God and part of his inerrant word. The source was the Holy Spirit.
  - 2. "One thing is absolutely certain. Enoch did utter this great prophecy and Jude recorded it."
  - 3. Yes, but we find a very similar statement in the Book of Enoch? So what? That truth may have appeared in other books as well as in Jude.
  - 4. If Jude did quote the book of Enoch, his quotation gives an inspired sanction only to the truth of that passage.
    - a. There is no basis at all to argue that Jude confirmed the entire book of Enoch or even that Jude himself believed that the book of Enoch was true beyond that single passage.
    - b. Just as Paul by inspiration sometimes quoted extra-Biblical sources, he did not sanction everything they had ever written.
- H. If Jude did not quote the Book of Enoch, then how did Jude get the information about Enoch, and how do we explain the similarity with what is found in the Book of Enoch?
  - 1. Many commentators wonder how Jude could have known what Enoch said so long ago.

- a. Well, how were Josiah and Cyrus described and even named prior to their births? (1 Kings 13:2-3; 2 Kings 22:1; 23:15-16; Isaiah 44:28)
- b. How did Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar why Rome fell nearly 1000 years before it happened?
- c. They knew these things because the Holy Spirit knew these things, and that is also how Jude knew what Enoch said thousands of years earlier.
- 2. As for the apocryphal works, we should note that they almost always contain within them some grain of truth.
  - a. The problem is that the grain of truth in those books has been elaborated upon and obscured by the wisdom of man. And so that grain of truth becomes mixed with a great deal of speculation and falsehood.
  - b. The Holy Spirit allowed Jude to extract that grain of truth and provide it to us in his letter.
- 3. Where did the author of the Book of Enoch get that grain of truth? How did he know what Enoch said? He didn't get it from the Holy Spirit, right? Well, maybe.
  - a. The Old Testament prophets, just as the New Testament apostles, both wrote and spoke by inspiration. Not everything they said was recorded. The Old Testament prophets likely quoted Enoch by inspiration as they spoke the words of God to the people of their day. Some of those people may have written it down, and that could explain how it made its way as a grain of truth into the Book of Enoch.
  - b. One author who has written an entire book about the Book of Enoch says that portions of that book are likely attributed to a very

conservative group of Jews "whose roots go right back to the time of the first temple when there were still kings in Jerusalem." And there were still prophets around at that time as well.

• **IV. The Date and the Audience**

- A. To whom was Jude written?
  - 1. Jude's audience seems to have been largely Jewish.
  - 2. The references to Old Testament history and Jewish writings make it likely that Jude's intended audience was Jewish.
  - 3. Some argue that the false beliefs that Jude fights against were not common among the Jews, but as we have seen the roots of Gnosticism are largely Jewish.
- B. When was Jude written?
- C. Barclay says that there are definite indications that Jude is not an early book.
  - 1. It speaks of the faith that was once delivered to the saints (verse 3). That way of speaking seems to look back from a more established time of the church's history.
  - 2. In verses 17 and 18, he urges the people to remember the words of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. That also seems to come from a time when the apostles were no longer there and the Church was looking back on their teaching.
  - 3. "The atmosphere of Jude is of a book which looks back."
- D. One bit of evidence regarding the date of the letter comes from a comparison of Jude with the letter of Second Peter.

- 1. One of the most vexing issues with Jude is its relationship with Second Peter and how that is to be explained. The handout shows a large number of striking similarities between the two letters.
- 2. Three possible explanations have been offered: (1) Second Peter depends upon Jude; (2) Jude depends upon Second Peter; (3) They both depend upon some other source.
- 3. We should note that saying Jude depends on Second Peter or Second Peter depends on Jude in no way casts doubt on the inspiration of both.
  - a. Inspired writers often quote other inspired writers. In fact, inspired writers sometimes quote uninspired writers, thereby confirming the truth of whatever portion they quote.
  - b. And both letters could depend on another source either because that other source is itself inspired (for example, an inspired sermon by an apostle) or because the Holy Spirit confirmed the truth of that other source by its inclusion in 2nd Peter and Jude.
- 4. Most commentators today believe that Second Peter depends upon Jude.
  - a. Why, they argue, would Jude have written his letter otherwise since much of it would already have appeared in Second Peter?
  - b. But we should note that most of the commentators who argue that Jude is earlier do so because they have a hidden agenda.
    - 1) They argue Jude is earlier because they do not believe that Second Peter was written by Peter at all but instead appeared much later.
    - 2) We considered and rejected that notion in our series of lessons on 1st and 2nd Peter, which are available on our website.

- 5. Others argue that Jude is later and depends on Second Peter.
  - a. If so, that would help us date Jude.
    - 1) Second Peter was likely written sometime between AD 60 and 68.
    - 2) We know it was written shortly before Peter's death, and many place his death in AD 65.
  - b. The rougher grammar and style of Second Peter suggest that perhaps Jude smoothed out and improved Peter's writing.
  - c. Also, there would have been a motive for Jude to write his letter even if Second Peter had already been written because there are crucial parts of Jude's letter that are not contained in Second Peter.
  - d. Also, while Peter *prophecies* by saying there *shall be* false teachers and mockers, Jude records with *past tense* the fulfillment of that prophecy.
    - 1) But others argue that Peter and Jude may have been addressing different situations - one where the false teachers were coming and one where they had already arrived. Also, 2nd Peter sometimes also uses the present tense to describe the false teachers.
  - e. But others argue that Jude 17-18 refer to the words of 2 Peter 3:3 and tell us to remember the words spoken before by the apostles. They argue that this link strongly suggests and perhaps even proves that Jude's epistle came after Peter's.
- 6. Others argue that the best explanation on the priority between Jude and 2nd Peter is that they both depend upon a common source rather than upon each other.

- a. Perhaps they both depend upon sermons and teachings of an apostles that we do not have in their original form.
  - b. In fact, out of the parallel passages between 2nd Peter and Jude, the passages from 2nd Peter contain 297 words and the parallel passages from Jude contain 256 words. But they share only 78 words in common.
  - c. That means that if 2nd Peter is the borrower then he has changed 70% of Jude's language and added more of his own. And if Jude is the borrower, then the percentage of alteration is slightly higher and combined with a reduction in quantity.
  - d. It is significant that of the 12 parallel sections, Jude's text is verbally longer than Peter's in 5 places, showing that neither author can be considered more concise than the other.
  - e. In any event, we should note that the two letters rarely agree in the exact words used. Often the same themes are developed in different ways.
- E. So what does all of this tell us about the date of Jude?
    - 1. In my opinion, Jude comes after Second Peter.
      - a. I think Jude is experiencing what Peter prophesied about.
      - b. Also, the Gnostics really became a problem after AD 70, and Peter was dead by that time.
      - c. Peter prophesied that the Gnostics would come, and Jude and John tell us what happened when they did come.
    - 2. In my opinion, Jude was likely written around AD 80, but may have been written as late as AD 90, after the death of all the apostles except perhaps John.

• **V. Who is the author of Jude?**

- A. That one is easy! He is named in the first verse: Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.
- B. But some people think that Jude was written not by Jude but by someone who merely used Jude's name to give his letter some weight.
  - 1. We discussed and rejected that notion earlier with regard to the book of James. That rejection should come even more quickly with regard to Jude.
  - 2. Why would someone choose Jude to give his letter weight when Jude does not appear to have been a major figure in the early church? Why would such an author choose Jude? And having chosen Jude, wouldn't we expect him to begin the letter by saying that he was Jude, *the brother of Christ*?
- C. In the New Testament there are five people called Jude or Judas.
  - 1. None of these first three has ever seriously been considered as the author of this letter.
    - a. There is the Judas of Damascus in whose house Paul was praying after his experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:11).
    - b. There is Judas Barsabas, a leading figure who, along with Silas, was the bearer to Antioch of the decision from Jerusalem in Acts 15. This Judas was also a prophet (Acts 15:32).
    - c. There is Judas Iscariot.
  - 2. There is the other apostle named Judas. John calls him Judas, not Iscariot (John 14:22).
    - a. In fact, in Luke's list of the apostles there is an apostle whom the KJV calls Judas the brother of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).
    - b. But in the Greek this man is simply called Judas of James.

- c. This is a very common idiom in Greek and almost always it means not brother of, but son of; so that Judas of James is not Judas the brother of James but Judas the son of James, as all the newer translations show.
- 3. Finally, there is the Judas or Jude who was the brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).
  - a. If any of these men is the writer of this letter, it must be this one, for only he could truly be called the brother of James.
  - b. Our knowledge of Jude, the brother of James and half-brother of Christ, is scant.
    - 1. He was one four brothers of Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). The order of the names varies in those two accounts, although James is named first in both. That likely means that James was older than Jude.
    - 2. We know that Jude was not a believer during Jesus' earthly ministry (Mark 3, John 7), but he became a believer after the resurrection (Acts 1:14).
    - 3. We learn from 1 Corinthians 9:5 that the Lord's brothers were missionaries, which would explain how he could write such an authoritative letter.
    - 4. We also know from that verse that Jude was married. And we know that from history as well - there is a historical account of Jude's grandsons being brought before the Emperor Domitian.
- 4. As with James, some have raised objections to the notion that the author of Jude was the brother of Christ.

- a. First, if Jude is the brother of Christ, then why does he not say so? Why does he identify himself as Jude the brother of James rather than as Jude the brother of Jesus?
  - A) We answered this question with regard to James, and the answer is the same for Jude.
  - B) Jesus was not only Jude's brother but Jesus was Jude's Lord, and that is the relation that Jude stresses.
- b. It is argued that the Jude of Palestine, who was the brother of Jesus, could not have written the Greek of this letter as he would be an Aramaic speaker.
  - A) We also dealt with this argument in our introduction to James, and the answer remains the same with regard to Jude.
- D. The author of Jude is Jude the brother of James and the half-brother of Jesus. And as with James, it tells us much about the letter when we understand that it was written by one who knew Jesus so well, spent so much time with him, and looked up to him as an older brother. If anyone could rightly call us to stand up and defend the faith, it would be he!