

What do these things have in common?

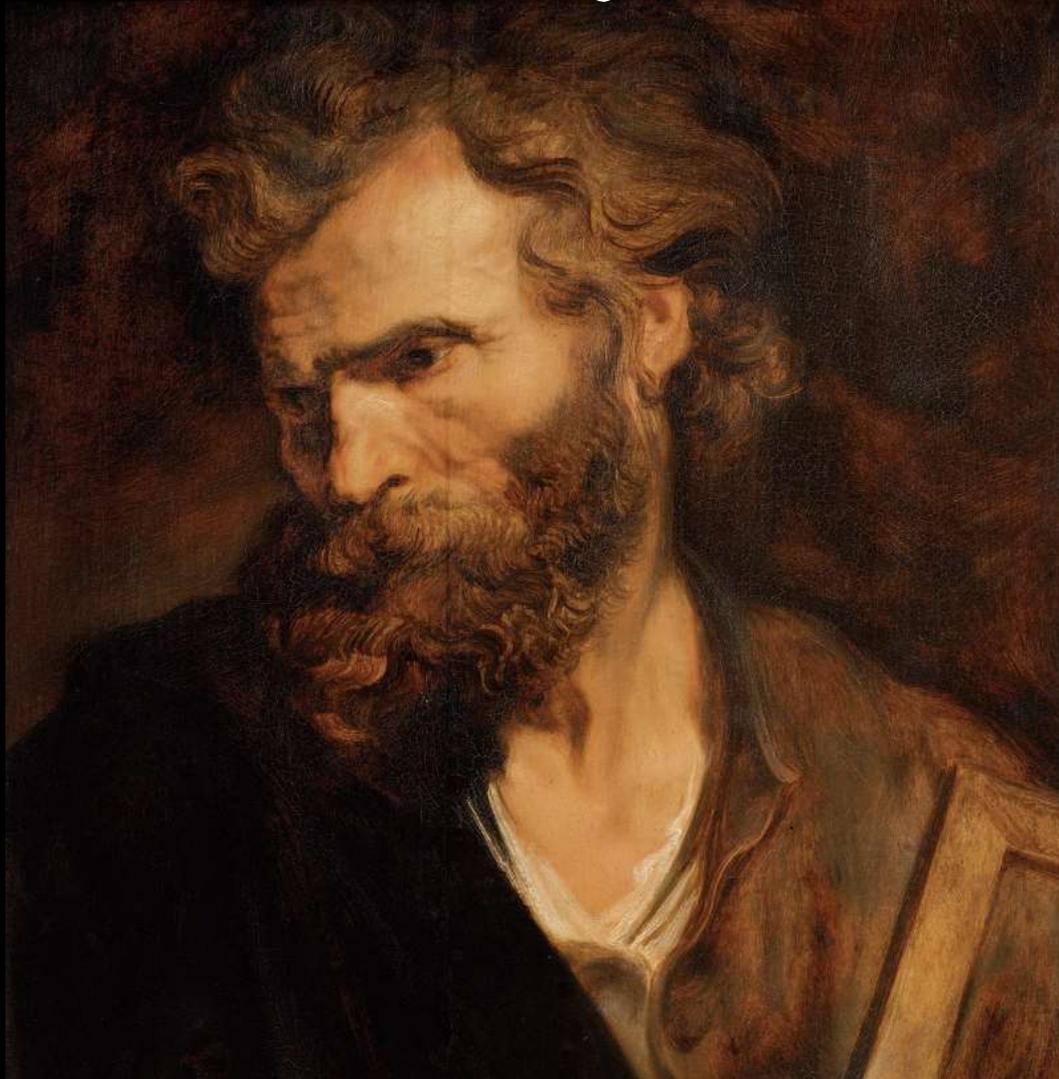








What did those things have in common?
They are all very dense.
And so is the book this guy wrote:



That is a famous painting of Jude, author of the next to last book in the New Testament.

Jude's epistle has been described as:

- Very short, but very dense, and...
- ...the most neglected book in the NT.

And why is it the most neglected book?

- Because...it is very short, but very dense.

Some questions come up...

- What's up with the angels in eternal chains stuff?
- And what's with Michael arguing with Satan?
- And why quote from stuff not even in the Bible?
- And how am I supposed to keep *myself* in the love of God? Isn't that His role?

Let's pick some low hanging fruit first, shall we?

From the text, what can you learn about the author?

- He was named *Jude*
- He considered himself a servant of Christ
- He was a brother of James
- He wrote an epistle to believers

But all that raises even *more* questions...

- His real name was *Judas* (or *Judah*, in Hebrew), and there were several. Which one was he?
- Why does he call himself a servant of Christ?
- There were several James's...which one was his brother? And does it matter?
- Who did he write to?

Let's pick some low hanging fruit first, shall we?

What can you learn about Jude's audience?

- “called...beloved...kept.” Notice this: he doesn't describe them *geographically*, but *theologically*.
- In danger of being swayed by false teachers.
- And he saw that they needed...
- ...to be built up in their faith
- ...to be concerned for the souls of others
- And he knew that they would be preserved—kept—by Christ until the very end.

But we have no clue who they were or where they lived. Nothing in the text tells us any of that.

Let's pick some low hanging fruit first, shall we?

Well...who *did* Jude write to?

- Answer: we don't know. But that won't stop me!

There are a couple of possibilities:

1. He may have written to a specific (and unnamed) church where false teachers were having some influence.

B. Or, he may have intended his letter (or several copies of it) to be distributed generally among gatherings of believers because he saw the great danger of false teaching springing up here and there.

Ok—let's dig a little deeper now:

Paragraph themes—what's he talking about?

v. 1-2—introduction, greeting, prayer wish

v. 3-4—his purpose for writing: Contend for the faith because there are those actively distorting it

v. 5-7—three examples of the judgment of the ungodly

v. 8-13—the character of the false teachers, and the certainty of their judgment

v. 14-16—pronouncement of judgment

v. 17-23—his exhortation to the faithful

v. 24-25—praise to God for His preservation of the church

Ok—let's dig a little deeper now:

Any key repeated words that you notice? How about important transition words (like *but*, *so*, *and*, *therefore*, *since*, etc.)

Some that I noticed:

- Four times Jude refers to them as *beloved*—v. 1, 3, 17, 20.
- Blaspheme/blasphemous—v. 8, 9, 10.
- Ungodly—v. 4, 15 (4x), 17.
- “kept for Jesus Christ” (v. 1), “able to keep you from stumbling” (v. 24).
- “waiting for the mercy” (v. 21), “have mercy” (v. 22), “show mercy” (v. 23).

Ok—let's dig a little deeper now:

Jude likes lists. Can you find any lists he has made?

- v. 1
- v. 2
- v. 8
- v. 11
- v. 12-13
- v. 16

What feels to you like a key verse for the letter?

- My choice: v. 3.

What is the main theme of Jude's letter?

- A big clue: v. 3
- I put it like this: Contend for the faith with confidence—God will judge those who are distorting it.

Ok—let's dig a little deeper now:

Well, now that we've done all that, let's outline the letter. Take your best shot at giving a title to each section:

v. 1-4: Jude's introduction and purpose:
Contend for the faith

v. 5-16: Jude's sober warning and encouragement:
The ungodly will be judged

v. 17-25: Jude's exhortation and exaltation: Keep yourselves in the love of God—He will keep you

The neglected letter of Jude ~

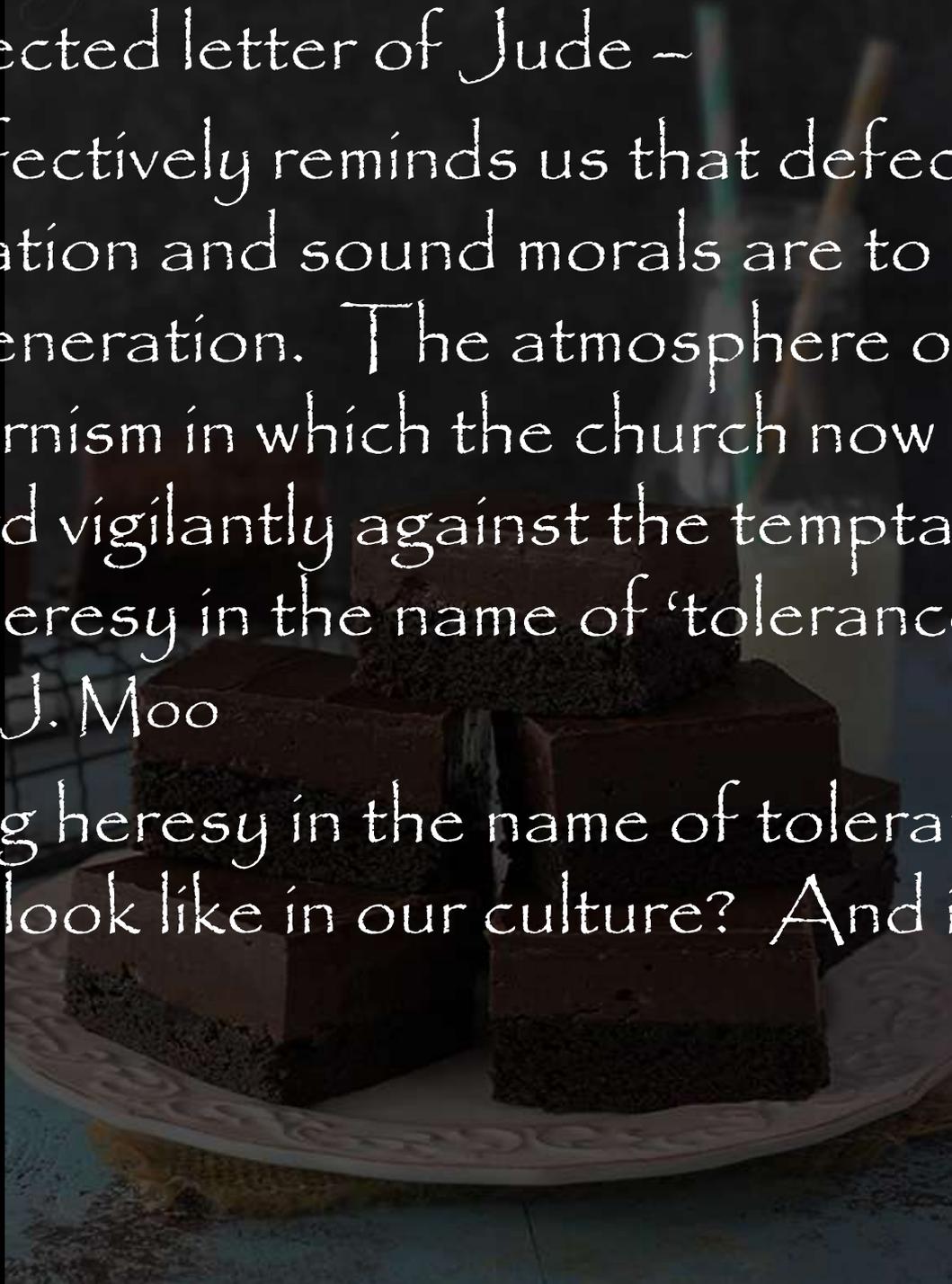
“People do not like to dwell on the negative. That may be one reason why Jude is such a neglected letter. But we need to hear the negative: we need to understand that false teachers exist, that their teaching can be both attractive and dangerous, and that their condemnation is certain. All these points Jude makes abundantly clear. Jude’s strategy in making these points is particularly effective: by associating the false teachers with sinners, rebels, and heretics in the Old Testament and Jewish tradition...

The neglected letter of Jude ~

...Jude effectively reminds us that defections from true revelation and sound morals are to be expected in every generation. The atmosphere of postmodernism in which the church now lives requires us to guard vigilantly against the temptation to welcome heresy in the name of "tolerance."

~ Douglas J. Moo

Welcoming heresy in the name of tolerance...what does that look like in our culture? And in the church?



The neglected letter of Jude ~

William Barclay: "It may well be said that for the great majority of modern readers to read the little letter of Jude is a bewildering rather than a profitable undertaking. There are two verses of Jude which everyone knows—the resounding and magnificent doxology with which it ends: verses 24-25. But, apart from these two great verses, Jude is largely unknown, and seldom read."

But why is it "largely unknown and seldom read"?

"The reason for the difficulty of Jude is that it is written in the language and in the thought of its day."

The neglected letter of Jude ~

What does Barclay mean when he says, "it is written in the language and in the thought of its day?"

He means this: Jude is a very *Jewish* letter. Jude uses many OT references (though not quotes), uses illustrations from several extra-biblical sources (Jewish apocryphal books) that would have been well known to the Jewish readers of his letter.

Barclay continues: "It is written out of a background of thought, against the challenge of a situation, in pictures, and with quotations, which are all quite strange to us.

Beyond a doubt it would hit those who read and heard it for the first time like a hammer blow and like a trumpet call to defend the faith."

A few things...

Jude saw that the teaching that was popping up was perverting “the grace of our God into sensuality,” which was effectively a denial of “our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (v. 4).

- Basically they were saying that the free forgiveness of God made it ok to throw off all self-restraint, and just abandon yourself to whatever immoral behavior you like best.
- Jude knew that this was a denial of all that Christ had accomplished and intended to do in His redeemed ones—this was a severe threat to their faith.

A few things...

Question: Do you think the people Jude was writing to *knew* that their faith was being threatened?

Another question: How do you know when—or if—your faith is being threatened? Can you know that?

And still another follow up question: How do you know if you are spiritually healthy? How do you gauge the strength of your relationship with God?

One answer: An author named Donald Whitney (who has written some *excellent* books on spiritual growth), wrote one called “Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health.” Let’s just take a quick run through his ten questions...

10 questions to diagnose your spiritual health ~

1. Do you thirst for God? Ps. 42:1-2, 63:1. "So holy desire, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in Scripture as an important part of true religion." ~ Jonathan Edwards
2. Are you governed increasingly by God's Word? Ps. 1:1-3. "The sum and substance of the preparation needed for a coming eternity is that you believe what the Bible tells you and do what the Bible bids you." ~ Thomas Chalmers

10 questions to diagnose your spiritual health ~

3. Are you more loving? 1 Cor. 13:4-8. "The more a person loves, the closer he approaches the image of God." ~ Martin Luther
4. Are you more sensitive to God's presence? Matt. 6:5-6. "If the soul of the believer is in a healthy condition, he will take occasion to frequently come into God's presence on purpose to have communion with Him." ~ A.W. Pink
5. Do you have a growing concern for the spiritual & temporal needs of others? Heb. 3:13. "There is nothing in which men resemble God more truly than in doing good to others." ~ John Calvin

10 questions to diagnose your spiritual health ~

6. Do you delight in the bride of Christ? Ps. 16:3.

“The closer you are to the Lord, the closer you will be to other believers.” ~ Peter Jeffery

7. Are the spiritual disciplines increasingly important to you? Ps. 119:97. “Without a disciplined life you will stagnate as a Christian.” ~ Peter Jeffery

8. Do you still grieve over sin? Ps. 51:1-4. “I am convinced that the first step towards attaining a higher standard of holiness is to realize more fully the amazing sinfulness of sin.” ~ J. C. Ryle

10 questions to diagnose your spiritual health ~

9. Are you a quicker forgiver? Mark 11:25; Eph. 4:32. "The unforgiving spirit...is the number one killer of spiritual life." ~ James Coulter

10. Do you yearn for heaven and to be with Jesus? 2 Tim. 4:7-8. "You may judge of a man by what he groans after." ~ Charles H. Spurgeon

Remember—God's goal in redeeming sinners is not to have us complete a checklist of spiritual things; rather, it is to fully conform us to Christ.

"The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us." ~ C. S. Lewis