



Jude tells his audience to do this: “...contend for the faith...”

That’s a very strong word—we’ll get into it more in a bit—but let’s remember that this is the theme of Jude’s short letter; this was the theme that was weighing on his heart.

- He is telling them that regardless of their age, health, circumstances, or anything else, this *really* matters.
- He is not telling them to disregard everything else in life, but to remember this: if you do not contend for the faith, and the gospel is lost and sound doctrine is watered down...what will you have left?

Okay—here's the outline of Jude's short letter that we'll be using as we work our way through –

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

This is how I put the main theme of Jude's letter:

- Contend for the faith with confidence—God will judge those who are distorting it.
- And we'll call v. 3 the key verse (though you are certainly free to pick another).

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

A closer look at the first four verses:

- Jude's introduction – v. 1
- Jude's audience – v. 1
- Jude's desire – v. 2
- Jude's purpose – v. 3-4
  - Encouragement: our common salvation
  - Exhortation: contend for the faith—
    - Description of the false teachers
    - Results of their influence—
      - Perversion of grace
      - Denial of the authority of Christ

## Jude's introduction – v. 1

The first thing Jude does is introduce himself...what does he say about himself?

His name: we mentioned last week that his name is actually *Judas*, but that there might be a real good reason why it was changed to *Jude* for his official letter. Any guesses?

His description: Notice the words he uses—*servant* of Christ, and *brother* of James.

- Jude uses the Gk word *doulos* to describe himself—the word means servant, or slave. It was typically used for a male slave, like Onesimus in the book of Philemon.

His description: *doulos*, slave, of Christ

Bill Mounce: “*doulos* is often used metaphorically to describe the sole commitment of one person to another. Prior to faith in Christ, human beings are ‘slaves to sin’ (Jn. 8:34; Rom. 6:16-20), but Jesus Christ sets us free (Jn. 8:35-36). Paul then defines himself as a *doulos* of the gospel (Phil. 2:22) and especially of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Phil. 1:1).”

- “Jude regarded himself as having only one object and one distinction in life—to be forever at the disposal of Jesus for service in His cause.” - Barclay
- “...his saving relationship to Christ became more important than family ties...he was a grateful, willing slave of the Lord Jesus Christ.” - MacArthur

Jude's introduction – v. 1

His description: *brother of James*

By the time Jude wrote, the only James who could be identified by name without further description was James the Lord's brother (see Matt. 13:55).

So—we have this: Jude was the brother of Jesus.

Why, then, does he call himself *servant of Jesus* and *brother of James* rather than *brother of Jesus*?

- Wouldn't that have lent more authority to his letter? Given it that little extra punch?
- As with anyone who is genuinely converted, the indwelling Holy Spirit will do John 15:26 and 16:13-14. That's how Jude could say this.

## Jude's audience ~ v. 1

How does he describe his audience?

- Called, beloved, and kept.

What do you notice about this description?

- He does not describe them *geographically*, that is, by their location or church.
- He describes them *theologically*—he describes them the way God saw them.

There were probably some he wrote to whose personalities would not exactly mesh with his...but he thought of them the way God did, he thought of them according to theological truth, not according to their position or status or anything else. Try that.

Jude's audience ~ called

“Called...” meaning what?

All of the uses of this word in the NT “denote someone who has been called by God;” it is what God does to summon, or call, people to Himself.

- Notice Rom. 1:7, and especially 8:29-30
- Other uses: Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:21; 2 Pet. 1:3.
- It is always intended to make us think of God's unknowable sovereignty, to think of His kind enabling power to fulfill our calling, to think of heavenly, eternal, enduring things, and to think of our need to live in accordance with that calling.

Jude's audience ~ beloved

“beloved...” meaning what?

Notice that Paul clarifies this word: “beloved *in God the Father.*”

Believers are called to be loved by God ~

- Notice Paul's OT quote in Rom. 9:25
- The word refers first to a unique bond—reflected most clearly in the Father's relationship with Christ, the Son—Matt. 3:17; Luke 20:9-13.
- Second, the word refers to the person or group receiving the love—Rom. 16:5; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 4:14, 15:58; 1 Pet. 2:11.

Jude's audience ~ kept

“kept...” meaning what? Also see v. 24.

Again Paul clarifies: “kept *for Jesus Christ.*”

The thought: preserved, protected, safe.

- John 17:11, 15—preserved from denying Christ, preserved from destruction by the evil one.
- 1 Thess. 5:23-24—preserved by the faithful God of peace to be blameless at the coming of Christ.
- 1 Pet. 1:4-5—sustained and protected by the power of God to receive a full and imperishable future salvation.
- 1 John 5:18—protected so that the evil one cannot cause permanent spiritual loss.

## Jude's desire ~ v. 2

Jude asks for three things for the beloved saints: mercy, peace, and love.

- But don't they already have these things?

Remember—the people Jude is writing to are in the middle of a pretty intense spiritual battle, trying to preserve the gospel and the truth of God's word from distortion by false teachers.

- Jude asks that the things they already possess—mercy, peace, and love, be *multiplied* to them.
- In other words, that they would have all that is necessary to meet the need of the moment.
- Peter prays the same thing in 1 Pet. 1:2, 2 Pet. 1:2.

## Jude's purpose – v. 3-4

There was...

- The letter that Jude *didn't* write—the one of encouragement...
- And the one he *did* write—the one of exhortation.

So if Jude had gone on and finished his first letter, what would he have likely written about?

But he never finished that letter—an urgent need came to his attention, and he worded it like this:

“contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”

- As Jude wrote and was thinking about the saints, this need took on added urgency.

Jude's purpose – v. 3-4

“Contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”

The imperative: “*Contend...*”

We get our English word *agonize* from this Gk word; commentators say it is a “present infinitive,” which (they could have said more simply) means truth must be contended for continually. The need never ends.

So—we can say this: to contend for, or defend, the faith will be costly. It doesn't happen easily.

- It will put you out of step with a lot of people and with our culture.

Jude's purpose ~ v. 3-4

“Contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”

The imperative: “*Contend...*”

It takes this same agonizing...

- to bring Christians on to maturity ~ Col. 1:29
- to continue in prayer for the saints ~ Col. 4:12-13
- to learn self-discipline ~ 1 Cor. 9:25-27
- to flee evil and pursue righteousness ~ 1 Tim. 6:11-12
- to finish well ~ 2 Tim. 4:7

Jude was what every true shepherd should be: a watchman—Is. 21:6-9; Ezek. 3:17; Acts 20:28-30.

Jude's purpose – v. 3-4

The object: “...*the faith* that was once for all delivered to the saints.”

What does he mean by *the faith*?

This: “the known and received body of truth about Jesus and salvation through Him.” – ESV Study Bible

Though not much was written down by Jude's time, there was—by the mid-60's—a recognized body of teaching handed down from Jesus to the apostles, or received by the apostles through either study of the OT or by direct revelation, and it is this that Jude refers to as *the faith*. cf. Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; 2 Thess. 3:6.

Jude's purpose – v. 3-4

The object: “...*the faith* that was once for all delivered to the saints.”

“God...has handed over to His people a recognizable body of teaching about His Son, in feeding on which they are nourished, and in rejecting which they fall.” – Michael Green

Jude is making a pretty massive statement here: this body of truth that God has handed down through the apostles is normative—it is our standard, our way of life—for *all Christians for all time*. It was “once for all delivered to the saints.” It did not come from man (Gal. 1:6-12), and it is unchanging and unchangeable.

## Jude's purpose – v. 3-4

So here's an interesting question: This “body of truth” that has been received from the Lord is, we know, what comprises the Bible...

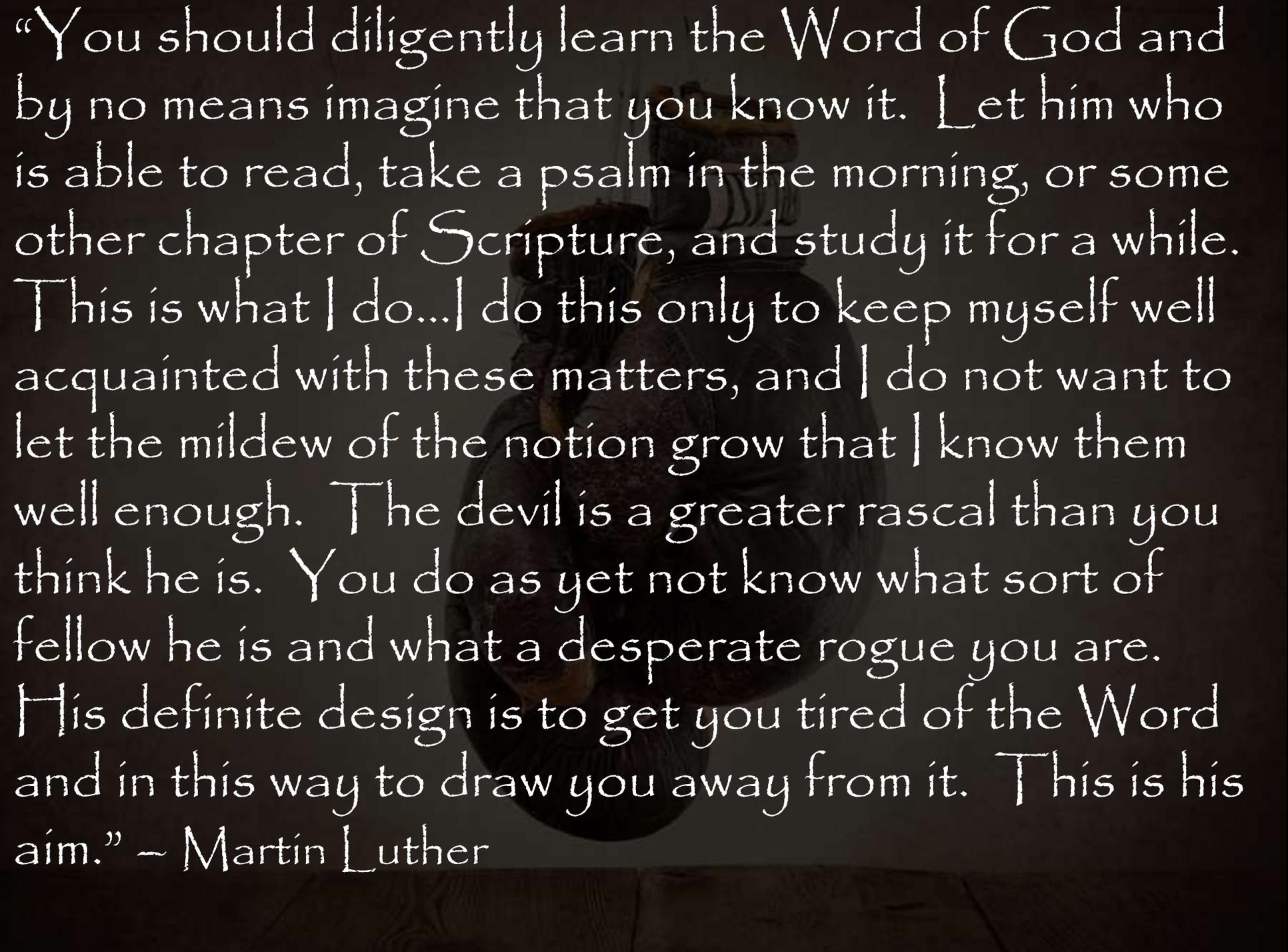
- ...but why *these* 66 books?
- ...what about apocryphal books?
- ...what about the other letters Paul wrote?
- ...we say that the “canon of Scripture” is closed, but what does that mean? And why is it closed?
- ...what do we do about modern-day “prophecy”—where does that fit in? Or does it?
- ...how did we get the 66 books that are in our Bible, and who decided that?

## Jude's purpose – v. 3-4

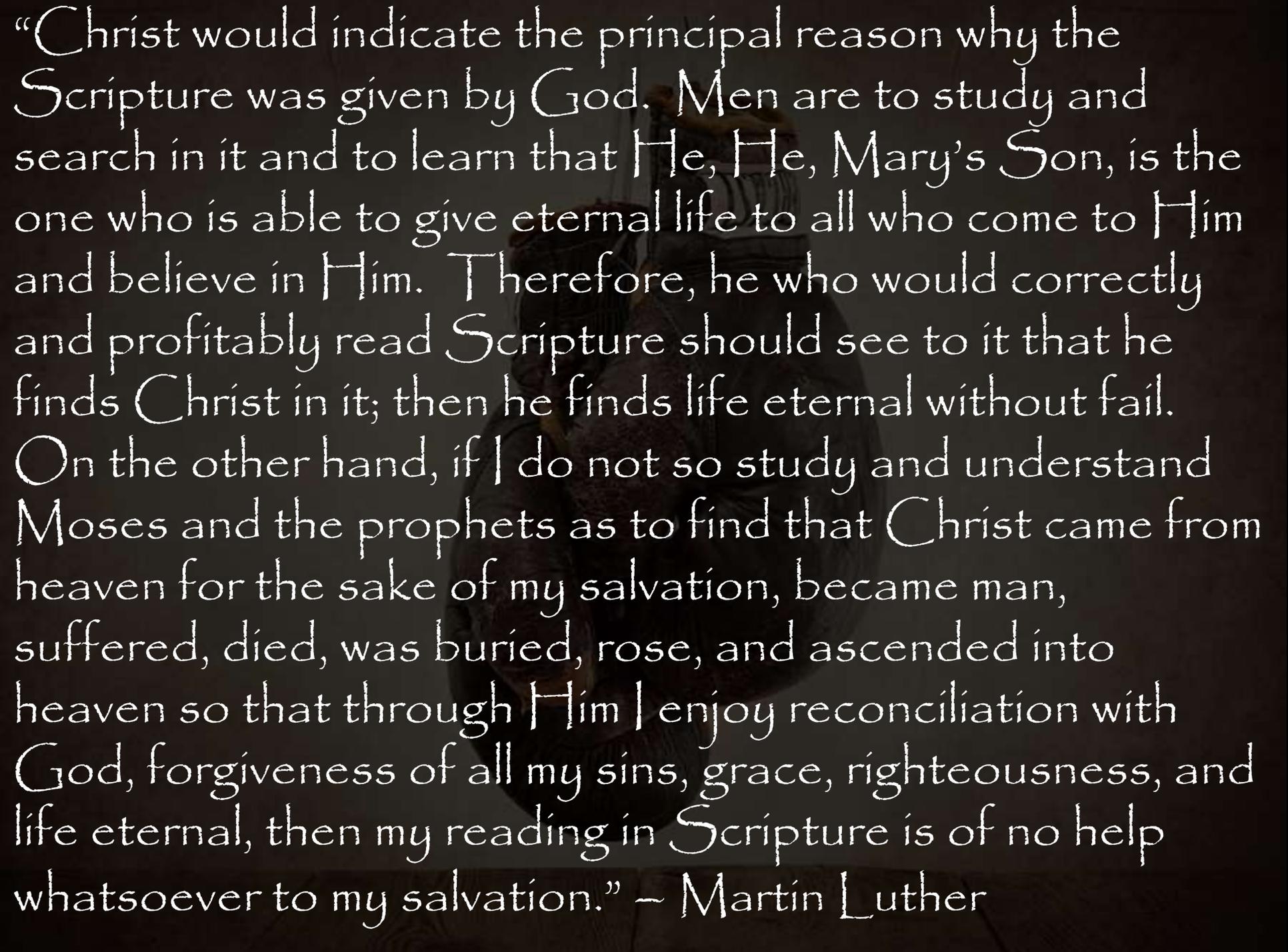
Well...next week we'll take a little side trip and look at this whole topic of the canon of Scripture: how did we get our Bible?

A couple of things to finish up with:

- If what Jude says is true, then what did Charles Spurgeon mean when he said this: “Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the Book widens and deepens with our years.” What is he saying?
- John Piper: “When all your favorite preachers are gone, and all their books forgotten, you will have your Bible. Master it.”



“You should diligently learn the Word of God and by no means imagine that you know it. Let him who is able to read, take a psalm in the morning, or some other chapter of Scripture, and study it for a while. This is what I do...I do this only to keep myself well acquainted with these matters, and I do not want to let the mildew of the notion grow that I know them well enough. The devil is a greater rascal than you think he is. You do as yet not know what sort of fellow he is and what a desperate rogue you are. His definite design is to get you tired of the Word and in this way to draw you away from it. This is his aim.” – Martin Luther



“Christ would indicate the principal reason why the Scripture was given by God. Men are to study and search in it and to learn that He, He, Mary’s Son, is the one who is able to give eternal life to all who come to Him and believe in Him. Therefore, he who would correctly and profitably read Scripture should see to it that he finds Christ in it; then he finds life eternal without fail. On the other hand, if I do not so study and understand Moses and the prophets as to find that Christ came from heaven for the sake of my salvation, became man, suffered, died, was buried, rose, and ascended into heaven so that through Him I enjoy reconciliation with God, forgiveness of all my sins, grace, righteousness, and life eternal, then my reading in Scripture is of no help whatsoever to my salvation.” ~ Martin Luther