

NEW TESTAMENT POSTCARDS

GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER!

JUDE 17–25



The Heart of the Matter

A battle against heresy has raged on and on for centuries with monotonous regularity and increasing intensity. The church was still in its infancy when the battle began. Jude exposed the false prophets who twisted the teaching of grace and resisted the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jude also exhorted his readers to stay on target themselves, to get their act together, and to stand firm in the faith against all opposition. His message remains the same for us today as we stand for unchanging truth in a world of fiction.



Discovering the Way

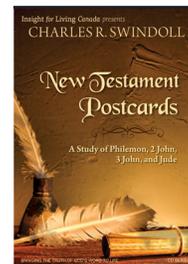
1. A Serious Situation

Jude worried that his readers might become spiritual casualties in the battle for good doctrine and right living—and for good reason. Those who received Jude’s letter had already been enduring physical oppression from the Romans, who, at the time, were stepping up their persecution. Now they had to weather the insidious assaults of the apostates. Jude fervently pleaded with his audience, exhorting them to fight for their beliefs.

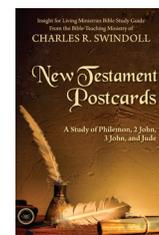
Although the circumstances have changed since the first century, the broader issue remains very serious. Many enemies of Christ today lurk outside and inside the church, waiting to assail our faith. That’s why, once we’ve girded ourselves with a protective fortress of truth, we must take action to protect other believers around us.



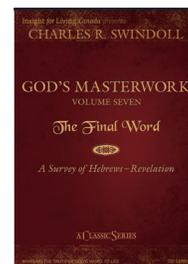
Tools for Digging Deeper



New Testament Postcards:
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CD series



New Testament Postcards:
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2. An Essential Strategy (Jude 17–23)

As Jude concluded his hard-hitting letter, he issued at least four commands to the troops in Jesus Christ's army:

- Remember your training (Jude 17–19).
- Keep in spiritual shape (verses 20–21).
- Have mercy on the war-torn (verse 22).
- Save the defectors (verse 23).



DIGGING DEEPER

*The Center of Theology*¹

Christians from the earliest days of the church to the present day have held to the following core doctrines of the faith: the infallibility of Scripture as the final authority in faith and practice; one eternal, triune God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the absolute deity and perfect humanity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, and literal, future return; the special creation and fall of humanity; salvation by grace through faith; and the eternal life of believers and condemnation of unbelievers. Those who have strayed far from this center of orthodoxy have been regarded as outside of the true Christian faith.

Some liberal theologians and critical scholars want to advocate further diversity in Christianity by including teachings that deny the essential truths of historic Christianity—the faith once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3). These teachers, bent on pluralism and relativism, deliberately emphasize a so-called “radical diversity” in the early centuries of Christianity and the dozens of false views about Christ. They want us to embrace as brothers and sisters the varieties of “Christianity” that have no part in the central truths of the faith. However, true Christians today must stand with the faithful saints of old who fought against heresy rather than tolerated or embraced it.

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Starting Your Journey

Jude's closing benediction communicated God's protection during the present and future battles (Jude 24–25). With stirring rhetoric, he called out to the troops who were engaged in spiritual warfare. Jude reminded his readers, and believers today, that we can only stand confidently before God because Christ has already secured our victory. Now we must remember that we bear the responsibility of supporting the faith of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We must intervene when they are in danger of drowning in a sea of deception.

Have you been motivated to help others who may have been led astray by Satan's sweet-sounding propaganda? Has God placed somebody in your path who needs your spiritual reinforcement?

ENDNOTE

1. Adapted from Insight for Living, *The Way of Truth in a World of Fiction: Beyond The Da Vinci Code* (Plano, Tex.: IFL Publishing House, 2006), 28–29.