
John, Jude, and False Doctrine

We often think of false doctrine as a relatively modern invention, a product of the denominational sprawl all around us. However, even a cursory study of the New Testament reveals that Christians 2000 years ago had no fewer problems with false teachers than we do today, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the three epistles written by John and the epistle of Jude.

1 and 2 John appear to be written in response to an early version of what would be known as Gnosticism. These wayward Christians regarded the material world as evil. In consequence, they denied that Jesus had actually come in the flesh and refused to acknowledge the importance of keeping God's commandments in establishing and maintaining a relationship with Him. 3 John concerns itself with the misdeeds of a man who created dissension in the church by demanding that others follow his own rules. The false teachers Jude describes had a similar problem. They rejected the authority of Jesus and gave themselves over to division and sinful pleasure.

In response to these various delusions, John and Jude penned a series of powerful rebuttals. John, who spent every day with Jesus for three years, who watched Him die on the cross, who saw Him eat and drink after the resurrection, who probably even touched the scars left by the nails and spear, knows as well as anyone that Jesus had come in the flesh, and he testifies to it. Likewise, he knows the perils that attend rejecting either Christ's commandments or authority. Jude warns faithful Christians that those who fall away are only the latest in a long string of rebels against God's authority, and that they will pay the price their predecessors have already paid. True spiritual fulfillment is not the product of special knowledge and licentious living. It can only come from obeying Christ and imitating the example of His dying love.

About the Author

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In This Is Love

A Study of
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude

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