

Jude

“When God speaks, He at the same time assures us that He is speaking.” - John Frame

The Mercy & Judgement of God

“Jude & the Canon of Scripture”

Jude: Introductory Considerations

1. The book of Jude has often been *neglected* by the church.
2. The book of Jude can be of great *value* to the church.
 1. It confronts us with ‘the question of canon.’
 2. It exhorts us to contend for the faith, both in terms of what we believe and how we live.

Jude & the Question of Canon

Defining the term ‘Canon’

‘Canon’ is derived from a Hebrew (*Qaneh*) and Greek (*kanon*) word which refers to a cane or reed used for _____.

- The term came to be applied to the Scriptures which alone are the authoritative rule of faith and practice for the church.
- The *Canon* of Scripture refers then to the books which God has inspired (2 Tim. 3:16) so that He might continually speak to His people.

How is ‘Canon’ determined?

- Some argue that the canon is determined by the _____.
- Some argue that the canon is determined by _____ study.

The problem with each of these models is that the canon is determined by an _____ authority.

The Canon as Self-Authenticating¹

If Scripture is truly the authoritative Word of God then the ultimate authority for determining canon is Scripture itself. The church therefore does not determine the canon, rather she recognizes it.

The Divine Qualities of the Canon:

1. The _____ of Scripture

Ps. 27:4—One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

The Scriptures are ultimately beautiful because they reveal _____ to us.

2. The effective _____ of Scripture.

Heb. 4:12—For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The Scriptures are ultimately powerful because the God who _____ and _____ through them is powerful.

3. The _____ of Scripture

Luke 24:44-48—⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

The Scriptures display unity because God is a God of unity and _____.

¹This terminology and much of what follows is taken from Canon Revisited by Dr. Michael Kruger.

The Necessary work of the Holy Spirit

- Although the Scriptures exhibit these divine qualities, it is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit in us which allows us to see them.
1 Cor. 2:12-14—¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

The Earliest Lists of the NT Canon

- The Festal Letter of Athanasius of Alexandria listed all 27 books of the NT in the mid-4th century (367 A.D.)
 - The church father Origen of Alexandria, in his homily on Joshua, produced a list that included all of the NT but Revelation in the mid-3rd century (roughly 250 A.D.)
 - The Muratorian Fragment which dates to the late 2nd century (roughly 180 B.C.) lists 22 of the 27 NT books.
- As the Church was exposed to the writings which would become the NT, they recognized them as Scripture by the power of the Spirit.
John 10:27—My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

The Reception of Jude as Scripture

- Although it was technically a “disputed book” (along with 2 Peter, 2-3 John, and Revelation), Jude’s reception as Scripture was remarkably positive among many of the Church Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria (150-215), Tertullian (155-240), Origen (185-254), and Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339).

Jude & the Divine Qualities of Scripture

- The book of Jude reveals Christ to us, reminding us repeatedly of His _____ .

⇒ Jesus is referred to as our “Lord” four times within the book (4, 17, 21, 25).

He judges the ungodly (4-7, 14-15)

He shows mercy (1-2, 20-21)

- The book of Jude is powerful, exhorting us to _____ for the faith and warning us against _____.

Jude 3-4—³ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

⇒ We must contend for the faith both in terms of what Christians are to _____ as well as how we are to _____.

- The book of Jude sets forth the unity of Scripture by forcing us to recall Christ’s actions in the _____ in order that we might live lives that are honoring to Him in the _____.

⇒ Jesus has judged sin in the past (5-7) and will therefore judge it again in the future (14-16).

⇒ As the recipients of His mercy, we must reject ungodliness and demonstrate that mercy to others (17-23).

Questions for Reflection

- What questions about Scripture have I found difficult to answer in the past?
- Which of the divine qualities of Scripture has been most prominent in my own study of Scripture?