

## Jude

“An epistle of few lines but full of the mighty words of heavenly grace” – Origen

Jude, like James, is a half-brother of Jesus Christ.

“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you” *Jude, 1-3*

- All believers are called: called out of the world by the gospel to belong to Himself
  - All believers are sanctified: set apart by God to be His special and pure people
  - All believers are preserved: preserved from danger, damage, and defilement in the world; salvation secured for eternity
- Jude wants believers to be characterized by mercy, peace, and love, rather than the selfishness, slander, and division of the false teachers he wishes to expose in the letter.

*The theme of the epistle: contend earnestly for the faith*

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” *Jude, 3-5*

- Men with hidden agendas had crept into the church, pushing their own weird twists on the Scripture.
- Two characteristics of these men: depraved conduct “turn the grace of God into lewdness” and corrupt doctrine “deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ”.

1. They were twisting Christian liberty into license. Freedom to serve was perverted into freedom to sin:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” *Romans 6:1-2*

2. They deny Christ’s deity, His right to rule, and His atoning death and resurrection. Instead of the Christ of the Scriptures, they have invented for themselves a liberal “Christ” stripped of glory, majesty, and authority. To them Jesus is just a good moral teacher.

“But to the Son *He says*:

‘Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’  
*Hebrews 1:8-9*

- Jude next reminds us of three examples to illustrate that sin does not go unpunished: the unbelieving Israelites, the angels that sinned, and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah:

“But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

- Each is an example of individuals rejecting God’s authority over their lives – with dire consequences: *Numbers 13,14; Revelation 12:4; Genesis 19*

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” *1 Corinthians 10:11*

- God punished sin in the past; He will do it again!

- Similarly, for the present-day false teachers Jude is referring to:  
They defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries

“Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.” *Jude 8-11*

- Michael the archangel did not speak reproachfully to Satan, but left the rebuke to God.
- Speaking evil of dignitaries: “there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God” *Romans 13:1*; “You shall not ... curse a ruler of your people” *Ex. 22:28*

- “These dreamers defile the flesh...and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves”: Their thought life is polluted by focusing on their natural instincts and sensual appetites, which eventually leads them into sexual immorality and self-destructive behavior.

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” *Philippians 4:8*

- “The way of Cain”: an attempt to appease God by human efforts. Cain brought his offering to God from the fruit of the ground, the work of his own hands; but Abel brought the “firstborn of his flock and of their fat”, the very best of what he had. God rejected Cain’s offering because there was sin in Cain’s life: Cain was seeking to come to God on his own terms. Reliance on human efforts leads to a hatred of grace and to the objects of grace; that hatred eventually leads to persecution and even murder: Genesis 4.

- “The error of Balaam”: a desire to become wealthy by making a business out of service of God: Balaam professed to be a prophet of God, but he was covetous, using his prophetic gift to make money. Five times Balak paid him to curse Israel, and he was willing to do it, but he was restrained by God. *Numbers 22-24*.

- “The rebellion of Korah”: an example of rejection of authority. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron and wished to intrude on the priestly office (*Numbers 16*). God showed his displeasure at rebellion against those whom He has set up as His representatives by allowing them to be swallowed alive in a great earthquake.

“These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” *Jude 12-13*

- Clues on how to spot false teachers: similes from nature

- They are “clouds without water”: holding the promise of refreshment but in the end leaving disappointment and delusion

- “late autumn trees without fruit”: no spiritual fruit in their lives:

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” *Matthew 7:15-20*.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” *Galatians 5:22-23*

- They are “raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame”

“*There is no peace,*” says the Lord, “for the wicked.” *Isaiah 48:22*. Their life is

tumultuous due to their own sin.

“that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ” *Ephesians 4:14*

- “wandering stars” do not move in regular orbits or predictable pathways and are thus useless as navigational aids. It is impossible to get real spiritual direction from these individuals.

The ultimate outcome for the false teachers: “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” *Jude 14-15*

- The false teachers claimed that God would not condemn anyone. Jude quotes from a prophecy to assert that one day the Lord will return to judge the ungodly deeds and words that have been spoken against Him. Although He is a God of love, His holiness will not allow Him to ignore sin.

“These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.” *Jude 16-19*

- Warnings from the apostles about false teachers:

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” *2 Timothy 3:1-5*

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.” *2 Peter 2:1-3*

“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.” *Acts 20:29-31*

- The real work of contending for the faith: “keep yourselves in the love of God.” While God will never stop loving His people, they are to be actively involved in maintaining that relationship:

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” *Jude 20-21*

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” *John 15:9-10*

“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” *1 John 4:16*

- An important component: praying in the Holy Spirit, both collectively and privately, guided by the Spirit.

“And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.” *Jude 22-23*

- Jude urges the believer to approach each person individually. Some need to be treated with compassion and lovingly urged to follow Jesus (teaching of God’s grace, mercy and forgiveness). But others need to be saved with fear (teaching of God’s righteous judgement on sinful mankind to come).

One of the most beautiful benedictions in the Bible:

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,  
And to present you faultless  
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,  
To God our Savior,  
Who alone is wise,  
Be glory and majesty,  
Dominion and power,  
Both now and forever.  
Amen.” *Jude 24-25*

- This reminds us of the necessity of God’s enabling power to allow us to live holy lives and resist apostasy