

This little letter from Jude was referred to by a 2<sup>nd</sup> century church father as "consisting of few lines, indeed, but filled with the vigorous words of heavenly grace." (Origen's Commentary on Matthew) I have included it with 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter in our series on Living in the Last Days because they are so similar. It is as if one of them used the other's letter as an outline for their own. There certainly would have been nothing wrong with that. Since 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter is believed to have been written between 64 and 68 A.D., Jude was probably written around the same time.

Jude introduces himself as the brother of James. The most well-known James of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church is the brother of Jesus. (James 1:19) Neither James nor Jude called themselves the brother of the Lord, but rather servants of Jesus Christ. Neither believed or followed Jesus in the during His ministry. (John 7:5) Whether it was a sense of sibling rivalry or shock at some of Jesus' actions, like reaching out to Samaritans (John 4:40-41), or His stand against the corruption of the establishment (Matthew 23:13), or perhaps His rejection in Nazareth (Luke 4:29), we don't know. It took His death and resurrection to get them to lay aside their complaints and realize who their half-brother truly was.

*<sup>1</sup> Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:* This is a typical Christian greeting, which was longer and more theological than the world's greetings of the time. It includes the author, the recipients, and an opening blessing.

Some commentators suggest that James and Jude became important because of their family relationship with Jesus, like princes of a king. That is obviously not the case, or they would have boldly proclaimed in the opening that their authority to write the letter was because they were Jesus' brothers. Instead they present themselves as the servants of Jesus. (James 1:1) That is the source of their authority and their appeal to the reader and us to take the letter to heart.

It was Jesus who said, "The greatest among you will be your servant." (Matthew 23:11) It is that upside down world of the Kingdom. The people you should listen to in the church are the servants. Jude is going to warn of the self-serving who have crept in unaware. That is a contrast that is still applicable today, the servants and the self-serving. Is the person there to serve you or use you? Listen to the ones that serve you.

The letter is not to a specific congregation, like some of the Apostle Paul's letters. It was probably meant to be circulated among a number of congregations. We have something in common with those congregations. We are called. The Apostle Paul wrote

**Commented [notes1]: Galatians 1:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

**Commented [notes2]: John 7:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> For not even his brothers believed in him.

**Commented [notes3]: John 4:40-41 (ESV)**

<sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days.

<sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word.

**Commented [notes4]: Matthew 23:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

**Commented [notes5]: Luke 4:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

**Commented [notes6]: James 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

**Commented [notes7]: Matthew 23:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> The greatest among you shall be your servant.

that, *...those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.* Romans 8:30 (ESV) In Paul's introduction to his letter to the Corinthians, he wrote that we were called to be saints, in other words, called to be set apart for God. (1Corinthians 1:2) The call of God goes out to all (Revelation 2:17), but only a few will respond.

**Commented [notes8]: 1 Corinthians 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

We should not be surprised when cultures decay. It is the way of man. It has been true throughout history. Great powers usually begin with a moral foundation. The decay of that foundation meant the decay of their power and influence. It was the way of Israel. Hearing and responding to the call of God is necessary for the health of a nation, a family, and each individual. You are called. How are you responding to that call? (Joshua 24:15)

**Commented [notes9]: Revelation 22:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

The letter is also to those who are beloved in God the Father. I am fascinated with the dimensional aspects of the Gospel. I was in Bern, Switzerland when I first really heard this. Billy Graham had several diagrams on a huge overhead explaining that we are in Jesus and Jesus is in God. That is what Jesus said in John 14. *<sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.* John 14:11 (ESV) If you are in Christ, then you are beloved in God the Father. We get another picture of this in Jesus' prayer in John 17 He prayed, *<sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.* John 17:23 (ESV) Believers are indwelt by Jesus who is indwelt by God! It is the source of our testimony. It is our unity. Our peripheral doctrines may not be in sync, but if we are indwelt by the living God, we are one! If we are in Jesus, we are beloved in God the Father.

**Commented [notes10]: Joshua 24:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Jude's last description of those to whom he is writing was that they are kept for Jesus Christ. This is a beautiful description! We are on our way to the marriage feast of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:7) We are the bride. We keep ourselves for Him and Him alone. We are kept from being spiritually unfaithful, from letting the world satisfy us. (James 1:27) Our eyes are fixed on Him. We are anxiously awaiting the sound of the trumpet that calls us to wedding feast. Through this dark night we keep our wicks trimmed and our lamps filled with oil. (Matthew 25:4)

**Commented [notes11]: Revelation 19:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

**Commented [notes12]: James 1:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

If you are called to be set apart for God, beloved in Him, and keeping yourself from worldliness as you wait for the wedding feast of the Lamb, then this letter is to you. If you aren't, then you are missing out on the reason you were created. Those descriptions can be true of you if you will come to Him.

**Commented [notes13]: Matthew 25:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

*<sup>2</sup> May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.* Paul the Apostle typically started his letters with the blessing of grace and peace. (Romans 1:7b) Peter also asked that the gifts of grace and peace would be multiplied to us. Jude's blessing is slightly different. Instead of grace, he used the word mercy. (Paul included mercy with grace in several

**Commented [notes14]: Romans 1:7b (ESV)**

: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

letters – 1 and 2 Timothy) The Greeks often used the word grace in their greetings and it was more of a request for a beautiful life for the recipient than the Christian idea of God's unmerited favor. Perhaps Jude wanted his Gentile readers to hear it differently from the normal greeting of "grace to you".

Mercy (*eleos*) is *not* getting what we deserve. We deserve the wrath of God because of our sinful rebellion towards God. Mercy is divine compassion for our weakness. Peace is that Hebrew word shalom (*eirene* in Greek) that includes quietness and rest, but also prosperity in every good thing.

Jude also adds love. In John 17:26 it is used to describe the love of God for the Son. This fits well with the address of his letter. If you are beloved (*agapao*) in God, then it is natural to ask that that love be multiplied to you. If you match the description of those to whom Jude wrote, then Jude asks for mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. This greeting is packed with the theology behind the whole letter.

Who doesn't need multiplied mercy, peace, and love! What if we started our emails with this blessing? Just a thought. That would be a nice thing to go viral.

*<sup>3</sup> 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.* Jude had a desire to write about our common salvation. It is wonderful topic. In a way, he brought it up in the greeting by referring to his readers as called and beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus. But there was a more urgent matter. Sometimes a warning must take precedence over edification.

It had been about 40 years since the Apostles first taught the early converts the life and teachings of Jesus. During that time churches had sprung up all over that part of the world. Soon it would spread even further. But with growth comes the challenge of those who would appropriate the movement for their own purposes. The rapid growth meant that many of the new church congregations had leaders who knew little about the Old Testament and only had limited training about Jesus' teachings. They surely understood the salvation that comes by grace through faith, but there were a thousand sidetracks that could lure them away from the simple truth. (2Corinthians 11:3)

One reason Paul went back to churches he had established and wrote them letters was to help them stay on track. They needed teachers to come and help them grow sound in their understanding of the truth of Jesus. But false teachers would also make the rounds to these new churches and take advantage of them. Anyone with much knowledge of the Old Testament or who came with stories of Jesus or angels would have been welcomed. So Jude is putting some boundaries on who you welcome to teach in the church as some were contradicting the original Apostle's doctrine.

**Commented [notes15]: 1 Timothy 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup>To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Commented [notes16]: John 17:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup>I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.<sup>27</sup>

**Commented [notes17]: 2 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup>But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Jude tells the reader that **this letter is an appeal to contend for the faith.** They needed to stand up for the truth they had received. It's a battle. (Ephesians 6:11) To contend implies a conflict and an effort of resistance. They needed to take a stand against these false teachers. That is as true today as it was then, and we have the same problem now they had then. Christianity is full of mercy and grace. One of the fruits of the Spirit is patience. (Galatians 5:22-23) We don't want to offend people unnecessarily. (Matthew 18:7) Those are all good things. But those who would like to push their own agenda can take advantage of them. That is why Jude is going to help us distinguish the wolf from the misguided sheep. We don't need to contend with our fellow sheep, but we do need to contend with the wolf. We do need to be vocal about the truth. (John 10:13)

**Commented [notes18]: 2 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

**Commented [notes19]: Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

**Commented [notes20]: Matthew 18:7 (KJV)**

<sup>7</sup> Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

**Commented [notes21]: John 10:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

There has been a national uproar over Dan Cathy's comments on marriage. He stated that if we as a nation dared to change God's definition of marriage (Matthew 2:5), we should expect God's righteous judgments. He was contending for the faith. Denomination after denomination is declaring that homosexuality is not sin and ordaining homosexual and lesbian pastors. We need to be vocal when that influence comes into our congregation. We love the sinner but we should hate the sin. We wouldn't allow an adulterer to be an elder. We *should* treat everyone with love, but **it is not love to be accepting of sinful behavior**, because sin damages the body and the soul.

**Commented [notes22]: Matthew 19:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"

I'm a bit baffled as to why no one will speak of the physical consequences of those lifestyles. A city passed a law on what size soda you can buy because it is harmful to your health, while they promote gay and lesbian lifestyles that are much more harmful to the individual. Contend for the faith!

We don't need to shout at people that don't have ears to hear, but we do need to educate ourselves to speak intelligently with those who are open to discussing an issue. (2Timothy 2:25) We do need to vote for moral principles. We do need to know chapter and verse in the Word that addresses the issues at hand, especially if it is in the church.

**Commented [notes23]: 2 Timothy 2:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,

*<sup>4</sup> 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.* Now we will begin to see this letter from Jude line up with the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter of Peter. These false teachers creep in unnoticed. Peter said they secretly bring in their heresies. (2Peter 2:1) In many respects they look like a believer. They seem to have peace and to love the family of God, but it is a disguise. They are ungodly.

**Commented [notes24]: 2 Peter 2:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

Here is their tactic. They take the grace that says that God has forgiven all our sins, both past, present and future, and reason that it really doesn't matter if you do that thing your flesh is longing to do. God has already forgiven you. In some cases they even call it godliness to justify their own sinful behavior. They claim they are doing it

for a godly motive and intentionally confuse the issue. Both Peter and Jude say the false teacher's main attraction is sensuality. (2Peter 2:2) They both declare that these ultimately deny the Master or Lordship of Jesus. They are their own lord. Sometimes you have to ask quite a few questions, but if you delve deeply enough you will find it is not the same Jesus that you worship.

**Commented [notes25]: 2 Peter 2:2 (ESV)**  
<sup>2</sup> And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.

God allows this to test our faith. When we contend with the false teachers it helps us to know what we believe. We should ask, "Where does it say that in the Bible? What was the context? Is it applicable today?" As we deal with those questions we grow in our faith. Don't take sound bites as truth. Be like the Bereans that search the Scriptures to find out if these things are true. Then contend for the faith. (Acts 17:11)

**Commented [notes26]: Acts 17:11 (NIV)**  
<sup>11</sup> Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

We don't need contentious Christians, who pick a fight and argue with believers and the world over every little thing. We do need believers that contend for the faith when teachings lead the sheep astray into sensuality, man worship, and denial of the reign of Jesus in our hearts.

The church needs disciplined disciples of Jesus that know the Scriptures and study to show themselves approved to God, a workman that doesn't need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. (2Timothy 2:15) There are many peripheral issues that can divide the body of Christ. We need to concentrate on the core ones, who Jesus is, and what He did for us, and what that should mean in our life today.

**Commented [notes27]: 2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV)**  
<sup>15</sup> Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

The Apostles also saw that sensuality was a major issue. It is not as major as Christology, but there is a connection. We saw it in the address of the letter. To those who are... kept for Jesus Christ. Because marriage is a picture of our relationship with Jesus (Ephesians 5:32), Satan would like nothing more than to pervert that picture. Monogamy is a picture of faithfulness to Jesus. How many stories of Scripture deal with this? From Sodom (Genesis 19:11) to the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 20:5) to the Corinthian church (1Corinthians 5:1), we see God deals severely with sexual sin. Why? It's not only because it damages the body and the soul, but because it distorts the picture of whom we are to be to our Savior.

**Commented [notes28]: Ephesians 5:32 (ESV)**  
<sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

**Commented [notes29]: Genesis 19:11 (ESV)**  
<sup>11</sup> And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

**Commented [notes30]: Judges 20:5 (ESV)**  
<sup>5</sup> And the leaders of Gibeah rose against me and surrounded the house against me by night. They meant to kill me, and they violated my concubine, and she is dead.

**Commented [notes31]: 1 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)**  
<sup>1</sup> It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.

We are just beginning this powerful little letter, but I trust you will find it as Origen said, "...filled with the vigorous words of heavenly grace." Brothers and sisters, contend for the faith delivered to us by those who recorded these words.

#### Questions

- 1 Who is Jude?
- 2 What are the dimensional aspects of Christianity?
- 3 To whom is he writing? Apply!
- 4 What are the implications of the last description?
- 5 How is his blessing different from Paul's?
- 6 Why is he writing?

- 7 What is he asking of us?
- 8 How can we do that in a godly way?
- 9 What is the main thing?
- 10 Why is sensuality so destructive?