

Note

Jude – Part 1 of 1

Summary

Jude challenges believers to contend for the faith. The ungodly men in the Christian community who reject the authority of Jesus Christ and lead others to sin will be judged by God. Authentic faith reflects Christ-like behaviour. Jude encourages believers to build themselves up in faith through praying in the Holy Spirit, loving God and showing mercy to others.

Transcript

Jude – Part 1 of 1

Today we come to the Book of Jude, possibly the most neglected book in the New Testament.

I'm sure many of you have never read it. Even if you did, you thought it was very strange and very hard to understand. It's about things like angels fighting with Satan... Stuff that we don't usually think about. Many of us don't even think about angels at all.

Secondly, it is also a book in which Jude quotes, quite a lot, from non-biblical sources. Jude was writing, largely, to a Jewish group of people. He uses a lot of quotations that are very strange to us. They come from books which we call the Apocrypha.

The Apocrypha were books written during the 400 year gap after Malachi until the coming of John the Baptist. There was 400 years of prophetic silence when God didn't have any prophets. "No one could save," thus saith the Lord. But during those 400 years, books were written by Jewish people who knew the Old Testament. They were not having direct new revelation, but they knew the Old Testament and God did show them some truths. The books that they wrote—to our minds—were not inspired. That's why they are not in the Bible. But there were truths in them. Jude, led by the Holy Spirit, used some of the truths in those books in the Book of Jude. To you and me, we've never seen those books before, so what he quotes seem very strange to us, but not to the readers of that time.

You begin to ask yourself this question, "Why does, in the second last book of the New Testament, God allow some books to be quoted that were not actually part of the inspired Scripture, as far as we are concerned?"

The Roman Catholics add some of these apocryphal books into the Roman Catholic Bible. The Roman Catholic Bible is a bit thicker than ours, and there are some of these apocryphal books. But, for us, they're not inspired.

Nonetheless, I think God wants to teach us that there are truths, even in other books. Sometimes, as preachers, we quote famous preachers. We all agree that those were good men, and they had good truths and we quote them. It doesn't mean every quote in our preaching or teaching must be from the Bible itself; we can take from good books. For example, books that are very popular, we can use those quotes because people get it very quickly. These were books that the Jewish people were very familiar with. So, Jude used these books. But, to us, they are quaint. That's another reason why this book is very much neglected.

Who is Jude?

He was one of the brothers (biological half-brother) of Jesus Christ.

We know that the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him until after the resurrection. That's found in Acts 1:14. Then they believed in Him when they saw the resurrected Christ. Later, many of them —I don't know how many brothers He had— several, at least four, maybe five, I don't know... 1 Corinthians 9:5 says that “they went around serving the Lord”. We have already read James who was also a half-brother.

Now, we have Jude. So, two half-brothers were writers of the Bible.

When people say “Virgin Mary” you have to be careful. She was only a virgin at the time Jesus was conceived. We cannot call her the “Virgin Mary” anymore. She had many children after that.

His real name was actually Judas or Judah, “Yehudah” as the Hebrews would pronounce it. I think, they put it as “Jude” because they don't want people to think that this is the “Judas Iscariot” which is not a very nice person to compare with.

By the time Jude wrote this letter, it was already much later after Christ's death and resurrection. These were second-generation Christians in the churches. So, the issues were very different already.

I want you to note that, in our generation two things, very commonly, corrupt the church.

One is legalism. People find the Gospel too simple. So, they make a lot of conditions. “You want to be a Christian? You have to stop this... And then, believe in Jesus.” Or “you must believe in Jesus, and do this... Then you go to Heaven.” Those are legalists. They find the Gospel too simple, too

plain, for their complicated minds. The Gospel is simple - being born again by faith, trusting Jesus - they add works. But, this time, usually, in our circles (so-called Bible-believing circles) there are not so many, there are few.

The second kind of church that usually comes up, after many generations, is the licentious church.

So, there is:

1. The Legalistic.

Too many rules. Instead of just believing that faith in Christ saves you, they add rules.

2. The Licentious.

“Oh, you're already saved, so you can live any way you like. Don't worry, you're going to Heaven anyway, you're saved.”

As a Sunday School kid, you're told, “You made a profession of faith... Don't worry, you're okay. You're on your way to Heaven. You already have a passport with no expiry date.”

Many churches have believers who love to hear licentious preachers so that they can have their cake and eat it. They can have both heaven in eternity and also live a sinful life now. So, these are the two.

The issue here that Jude was addressing, was the issue of licentiousness. It's very much like 2 Peter. Similar kind of sins. Sex and money became the obsession of “Christians”. When I say “Christians”, don't forget the inverted commas. Second-generation [Christians]. A lot of people just assume they are believers because they have been in church, they were born in church, they were baptized, etc.

Let's look at who were these people he was writing to. Basically, he was writing to Jewish believers. It's quite obvious, because he uses so much Old Testament Scripture and Jewish writings, the apocryphal books (which you and I don't even know about).

So, he was writing to Jewish believers.

Let's go into this book and look at it.

It's not easy, but it's a very small book. There is only one chapter, Jude 1.

Verse 1a: Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James.

He's the brother of Jesus but he calls himself a "slave of Jesus" and he does not want to break that up. He dare not call himself a brother of Jesus. I mean, it's like, the gap is too big. "He's the Son of God. He just happens to be born in my house. But I am a brother of James."

Even James did not identify himself as a brother of Jesus, he calls himself a servant of Jesus.

verse 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.

He actually intended to write a letter talking about the beautiful, wonderful faith they have, the amazing salvation they have in Christ, but he felt he needed to write about this because he sensed a crisis in the church. Maybe they didn't sense it, but he sensed it, and he said, "I need to write this."

And he said, "We have to contend for the faith."

The word "contend" is "to fiercely, strenuously fight" for the faith.

You and I, today, have to contend for the faith, because —believe me— churches are either legalistic and they make Christ less than a Savior, you can't be saved unless you do many things; or He looks like one who gives us a license, so we can sin because you have salvation.

Many people in the outside world think this about Christians: "There are so many things you cannot do." That's what we hear about legalistic churches. On the other hand, they say, "In churches, pastors can make plenty of money. They can buy penthouses. They fly in personal jets." They have these two ideas of Christians.

Many pagans see Christians as the most immoral people. They see America, they see Hollywood, and they think, "That's Christian." They see the President of America claiming to be Christian and he's been divorced two times, three times, whatever. "It's amazing. These are Christians."

So, these are the two views we need to contend. We need to fight, to preserve the name of our God and our faith "the faith that was once for all delivered to us". That's the same simple faith we have had, there's no need to add anything to it.

Verse 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 see here, these are people who crept in, unawares. In other words, you are not even aware they are there, you probably don't even know these things are happening in your midst.

I'm talking to lots of Christians who are probably listening to me right now. You probably don't even sense it, it's so normal now.

Actually, Jude is just saying what his half-brother Jesus said. Jesus said, in Matthew 7:15, "wolves will come in sheep's clothing." "I'm warning you..." Very early, in the Sermon on the Mount. "Wolves will come in sheep's clothing."

What does "sheep's clothing" mean?

They look like good guys. You trust them. They are your heroes. But they are wolves.

What do they come in to do?

They come in to "pervert the grace of God into sensuality". "Grace, free gift of salvation. You're going to Heaven. Jesus died for you. Do what you want." That's not the Gospel.

Free grace to receive Jesus as Savior?

So, Jesus comes into our heart, gives us a new DNA, which we learnt in 1 John, "we are born with a seed from God; born-again with a new desire, a new character; but if we want to sin, if we desire to sin, we're not a child of God."

That's what 1 John said.

But these people preach, "Just raise your hand. Raise your hand. Who wants to receive Jesus? Come up, receive Jesus. Hallelujah, you're going to Heaven. Now you can do whatever you like."

And so, they "pervert the grace of God into sensuality, and deny our Master—notice that—and Lord". We don't just receive Jesus as our Saviour, we receive Him as our Master and Lord. He's the One we obey. He's the One we want to be like. We are saved to be like Him, not to get a license from

Him to sin. Hyper-grace - which is now the main thing in the big churches, because people love this kind of doctrine.

One type of character likes legalism; they like to suffer, but not many. The other type loves licentiousness; they are free to do what they like. So, I hope you're seeing this book near the end of the Bible as something very important for you.

Verse 5: Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

From verse 5 onwards, he's giving examples. He starts with the first example that every Jew knows about: Two million came out of Egypt, but only two entered the Promised Land, because the rest didn't believe.

Every time, when people read this, there are interpreters of the Bible who said, "They are writing to believers. They are writing to Christians."

For goodness sake! Writing to people in church doesn't mean they are believers.

And they say, "See! They are writing to these believers, and these believers can lose their salvation."

They are writing to church-goers. Only God knows who is saved! And whoever is saved, is saved.

But who is in church?

I don't know who is saved. In Israel, at that time, two million came out. They all look like they were saved; only two were really saved.

In my church, I don't know how many. But you will know, by their fruit. You will know, by their life. If they live a "life of love", as we learned in 1 John, then we know that agape love has been put into their heart already.

Writing to believers is different from writing to people in church. Only God knows who are believers. There are commentators who keep saying, "These are written to born-again believers." How do you know who's born-again? So, it tells us, please be careful. Are you sure you are a believer?

Verse 6: And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

This is kind of quaint to us. We know, in Genesis 6:2, it says, “the sons of God married the daughters of man.” We don't know how to interpret “sons of God, daughters of man”. Commentators have all kinds of interpretation. But one of the apocryphal writers explains it, in 1 Enoch. 1 Enoch, which Jude is quoting, explains that these “sons of God” were actually angels, who had perverted sex with the “daughters of man” and produced a strange breed of people. God put them into this horrible place called “eternal chains under gloomy darkness”.

So, another example of angels -God also judged. The Israelites, God let them die in the wilderness.

Verse 7: just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

God burned Sodom and Gomorrah and sent them off to eternal hell.

What is God saying here?

God is saying that those who live this kind of life, life of unbelief, life of sexual immorality, rebelling against God... By their lifestyle, you know they're not believers.

And so, where do they go?

They got judged. God will judge them.

There's no theology in this book.

He doesn't say “they believe the wrong thing.” He is judging them, by their works.

By their works, you know whether they are believers or not.

Today, we judge people by their creed.

“Oh, he believes! I know, he raised his hand. I know!”

“He signed our church’s confession of faith.”

Look at their behavior. You can tell whether there is the seed of Christ in them, as 1 John says. If they keep on sinning, rebelling without any issue, without any conscience...

Verse 8: Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.

Verse 9: But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

Verse 10: But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.

He's talking about how people are so rebellious, they are not afraid to just blaspheme anything. He uses one example. Basically, he's talking about a rebellious guy talking arrogantly, rebelliously. When you see that kind of behavior, you better begin to wonder, "Is that a God-fearing man or a man who doesn't fear God?" He makes his own rules, he acts as if he's a god in the church, be careful!

He's using a story that we're not even familiar with. This is the story about the burial of Moses, in verse 9. He said "the archangel Michael fought with Satan, regarding who should bury Moses."

This is kind of quaint to us. But, actually, in Deuteronomy 34:5-6, it does tell us that nobody knows where Moses died. God told Moses to go up to the mountain (Mount Nebo) and he would die there, and be buried. But if nobody knows where he is, obviously, nobody went up with him to bury him. So, who buried him?

In this book called the "Testament of Moses"... It's a Jewish book, one of those books you and I have never read. But all the Jews know this story, which probably is true. Otherwise, Jude wouldn't have quoted it, God wouldn't have allowed Jude to quote it. The rest of the book may not be true, but this part may be true. Inspired or not inspired, but true. So, God allowed it. It says that God sent the angel Michael, to go and bury the body of Moses when he died on Mount Nebo, but Satan was already there and they disputed. The archangel (the number one angel!) said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you." The archangel dare not even say, "I rebuke you," he let God do it.

What is this really telling us? What is the lesson behind this?

That we should realize that we are all under God's authority.

Don't strut around, as if you own the church, as if you make the rules, as if you are this "big guy" in Christendom. Look at Jesus, the highest of all, but He looks so ordinary. Look at Paul, he looks so ordinary. Look at Peter.

Look at James. These are the servants of God, not those people strutting around who just act as if they are the authority on anything.

Even Michael, the archangel, you'd think he was going to come down in glory. But he was so humble, he said to Satan, "I'm not going to argue with you. God rebuke you. I'm not gonna say anything." You would have thought that Michael would say: "You, do you know who I am?" Nothing of that sort.

That's what this whole Book of Jude is about - the behavior. We always talk about doctrine. It's hard to know what a man really believes, but it's easy to see what a man really is.

Verse 11: Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.

He gives three more examples of bad, horrible behavior.

Cain killed his brother, because he envied his brother. The Bible says "because his brother's work was good." So, Cain behaved with envy. He didn't want to be upstaged by his younger brother.

The second guy mentioned is Balaam, found in Numbers 22.

What kind of person was Balaam?

He served God for money. "As long as you pay me, I will say what you want me to say."

There are many people like that, they preach to the gallery, they preach to the crowd. They know what will bring the crowds, and that means the offerings too, and the tithes.

And then, there was the example of Korah. Korah is found in Numbers. Korah led a rebellion, he didn't want Moses to have the limelight. He said, "Why Moses? Why not us? We're also from a good line, we're from the Levite line."

So, what is Jude trying to teach us?

Be careful, these men have come in:

- 1) People who envy others.
- 2) People who serve for money.
- 3) People who like to be number one, the big boys.

Be careful. That's got nothing to do with our faith. They're not showing that they are followers of Jesus Christ, the meek and lowly Servant of Galilee.

Verse 12: These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; [13] wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

Verse 12 says "there are hidden reefs."

All sailing people are frightened of hidden reefs. If you go to your boat and you can't see the reef, you'll hit the reef, you'll go down. These men are "hidden reefs" in your church. You don't know, they're going to sink you and sink your church. You can't tell because they don't look dangerous. Those waters, when the reef is hidden, look like safe waters to sail in, but they are dangerous.

They are shepherds who feed themselves. Waterless clouds - you expect clouds to give you water. No. They are swept along by the winds, swept so fast that the rain has no time to drop. Fruitless trees which don't give you anything.

Verse 13: wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame....

As the waves come in, it churns up the stuff at the bottom. The sand, the mud comes up. These are those type of people. You can see in their lives. You can see the shame coming up in their life, but they just don't know that it's shameful.

They think, "If I drive this big car, it shows that I'm a big guy."

It shows that they are actually the opposite of Christ.

They live in this fancy style, it's the opposite of Christ.

They preach hyper-grace, it's the opposite of Christ.

Opposite, totally opposite, but they don't know.

They let their shame come up. Proudly. Thinking, "Look at the foam I am producing, by the waves." But what kind of foam are they casting up? "Foam of their own shame."

So, that's what this book, near the end of the Bible, is teaching us.

Let's look at verses 14 and 15.

Verse 14: It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His holy ones,

Verse 15: to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Did you notice the word "ungodly" four times?
It's all about their behavior.

Can you see?

Their deeds- ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way.

Are you following what I'm trying to say?

Can you see it around you?

What is godly? Who is the example of godly?

Jesus, the perfect Example.

Do these people resemble Jesus?

Even a little bit or are they direct opposites?

Whatever they say, watch. Use your eyes.

You have seen Jesus in the Gospels.

You've seen Paul. You've seen Peter. You've seen James.

Now, you see your leaders. Use your eyes.

Don't hear what sweet, beautiful things they say. Watch their ways.

Many Christians don't know enough doctrine to question these people.

They never read the Bible. So, how can they question?

But at least, most Christians, except the blind church, can see. They can know.

Even if they don't know much about Jesus' teachings.

They know Jesus was a very simple Man.

They know He was a carpenter's Son.

They know poor Apostle Paul was making tents for living. He lived a very hard life, he was beaten, he was stoned, he was shipwrecked, he had nowhere proper to stay.

Jesus had no home, no penthouses.
Can you see that? Even if you don't know the doctrines.

Verse 16: These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

Again, nothing to do with doctrine.

Who are they?

The “grumblers”. The “malcontents”. Never contented. They want a bigger jet, a bigger car, a bigger house, a fancier hairstyle, whatever.

“following their own sinful desires.” They’re not following Christ. Sinful desire to be like Korah, they want to be number one; like Cain, they want to beat everybody... Just like the world.

“they are loud-mouthed boasters.”

And they show favoritism —to the rich— to gain advantage.

I think, enough said. So, anyone with eyes and a little deduction can figure out all the rest. There’s no need for too much explanation.

Verse 17: But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 18: They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.”

Verse 19: It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.

Verse 20: But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,

Verse 21: keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Verse 22: And have mercy on those who doubt;

Verse 23: save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Look at verse 22, “have mercy on those who doubt.”

There are people whose minds are still struggling. Have mercy on them, be patient.

“save others by snatching them out of the fire.”

Some are already deeply in. Some are just wondering, “Should I join this place? Should I be part of this church? Should I be part of this drama, in this whatever movement?” There are others already inside, snatch them out, but be careful.

“to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.”

Be careful. You might get tainted, in the process. It's quite easy. Worldliness is something we all fall for. We are not immune to fame, pride, arrogance, gain, all these things. Be careful. If you mix with such people, you can be stained. While trying to help them, you can be affected.

And then, finally, we just thank God.

Verse 24: Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy,

Verse 25: to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Please read Jude carefully. I think it's a very needful book in these last days because the wonderful God we know, the amazing Jesus Christ who serves, is now being pictured in the world as no more a Servant. But people will say, “Look at all that immorality. Look at all these super rich guys who use the name of Christ.” And then, the name of Christ is shamed.

That wonderful Savior, who came.

Humble. Meek. Born in a manger.

Grew up in a carpenter's house.

Went to ministry, with nowhere to lay His head.

Finally laid His head on a wooden Cross.

Buried in a borrowed tomb.

And today, the wonderful Agape love of Christ, is contaminated by wicked men, contaminating people's minds, to think "Christianity is a Western, Hollywood, materialistic God", who think that "Christians have a license to sin,"- hyper-grace, "You're saved, you don't even need to confess your sins. Just do what you like, all your sins are settled."

Men are shaming this wonderful God we have.

May God help you to contend for the faith.

Strenuously fight to preserve this simple faith:
once for all, given to us.

God bless you.