

## Jude

Today as we look at the Epistle of Jude, it is likely that he wrote with two heresies in mind: Gnosticism and antinomianism. Gnosticism, a philosophy that distinguished sharply between matter, as being inherently evil, and spirit, being good. One outcome was that Christ's body only appeared to be real – undermining the doctrine of Christ's deity. This prompted quite different results: on the one hand, antinomianism, the belief that one is not under obligation to keep the moral law, and on the other hand, an abuse of the body in order to promote spirituality. Jude's letter is an exhortation to stand up for the truth and stand against false teaching. Some open minds should be closed for repairs.

James wrote of the double-minded, who had faith but was doubtful.

“A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways,” he wrote.

Jesus spoke of those who were half-heart followers - not all in!

“Whoever is not with Me, is against Me...

if they do not gather with Me, they scatter abroad...”

John wrote of the lukewarm in the letters to the seven churches (as dictated by the glorified Christ in the Revelation),

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot;

I wish that you were cold or hot.

So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold,

I will spit you out of My mouth.

Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy,  
and have need of nothing,’

and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable  
and poor and blind and naked...” (Rev. 3:15-17).

A nominal Christian isn't overtly disobedient or offensive, he is uncommitted.

The nominal believers of Jude were guilty of tolerating those with doctrine error and evil behavior. Jude's goal was for the believers to stand strong against error.

I like what Vance Havner wrote,

“When I see a dog coming toward me showing his teeth

and wagging his tail, I never know which to believe.”

Christianity is Christ within us and His life through us.

- Miraculous in its origin for it is a gift of God.
- Miraculous in its operation by the grace of God.
- Miraculous in its objective – the glory of God.

## Jude Reading

### Outline of the epistle of Jude:

- I. Jude Greets the called :1-2
- II. Jude’s Reason for writing :3-4
- III. Jude’s Warnings of History against ungodly teachers :4-16
- IV. Jude’s Ultimate Encouragement and Hope :17-25

### Summary:

Jude is writing to inform his readers that they are in spiritual danger. He then points out the problem: false teachers. In the process he informs them of what they need to do to stand against the ungodly men in their midst and that they need to build themselves up in the faith, and move from being nominal Christians who can be influenced and led astray to being normal Christians who wage war against the evil infiltrators.

### I. Jude’s Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,  
To those who are the called,  
beloved in God the Father,  
and kept for Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup>May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

### Jude’s Identity

Jude is the brother of James, who was the half-brother of Jesus Christ, making him also from the family of Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus. Yet he refers to himself not as the brother of Jesus, but Jesus’ bond-servant. Jude has become a follower of Jesus, believing in Him as his Savior. (Mary called Jesus her Savior, since she was a sinner needing forgiveness and the willing handmaid of the Lord.

Jude’s greeting is a solely Christian blessing, exemplifying three amazing aspects of Christianity: mercy, peace and love.

### Jude’s Readers

The recipients of the letter are described in three ways:

**First**, they are *called* – Kleto, “to be called”

Paul said of the Roman Christians,  
 “among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; to all who are  
 beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace  
 from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 1:6,7).  
 They are the called of Jesus Christ and called to be saints.

To the Ephesian believers Paul said,  
 “...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,  
 that we would be holy and blameless before Him.” (Eph. 1:4)

Peter wrote,  
 “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His  
 calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things,  
 you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal  
 kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly  
 supplied to you.” (2 Pet. 1:10-11).

**Second**, they are *loved* – some translations say sanctified (set apart).

The Gk. is agape – which seems to be an emphasis in this letter.

Vs. 1. Beloved in God

Vs. 2. Love multiplied to you

Vs. 3. Beloved...

Vs. 17. But you, beloved...

Vs. 20. But you, beloved,

Vs. 21. Keep yourselves in the love of God,

Third, they are kept – “preserved” Gk. tereo – “rendered “kept” or “reserved”

Promise to be experienced: called, loved and kept by His great power.

Vs. 24 is a clear display of that keeping power and intent:

**<sup>24</sup>Now to Him who is able**

to keep you from stumbling  
 and to make you stand in the presence of His glory  
blameless with great joy.

These are essential aspects of their *common salvation*.

<sup>3</sup>Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you  
 about our common salvation,

Jude had planned to write an encouraging letter about their common salvation,  
 but then, as he said, he had to change to an appeal for them to contend earnestly

for the faith. It seems as if Jude had learned of the danger they were in because of false teachers.

Their common salvation was based on truth and that truth was under attack. There was an immediate need to defend the faith against those who would divide the Body of Christ and seek to destroy the faith of believers rather than build it.

## II. Jude's Purpose

I felt the necessity to write to you  
appealing that you **contend earnestly for the faith**  
which was once for all handed down to the saints.

**Contend earnestly** – they had to make a stand

Peter writes a similar word,  
“...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts,  
always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you  
to give an account for the hope that is in you,  
yet with gentleness and reverence...” (1 Peter 3:15).

Gk. Apologeō – give an answer, make a defense

The believers were instructed to contend earnestly, to give an answer to those who challenged the basics of the Christian faith. The difficulty was that the false teachers were within their fellowship. It would appear that the Christians were nominal in their faith and need to up their game. Jude was sounding the alarm.

They were in serious danger.

<sup>4</sup>for certain persons have crept in unnoticed,  
those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation,  
ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness  
and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

The danger was not from outside the fellowship, but from within.

Between verses 4 and 16 Jude gives two categories describing the false teachers: **First**, he exposes the characteristics of these ungodly men and the distinctives of their false teaching. **Second**, he describes the judgments which God is going to bring upon them and all who follow their evil ways.

Verse 4 describes them as ungodly in doctrine and practice:

They deny Jesus Christ as the only Master and Lord.

They turn grace into a license to live the life of immorality – licentiousness.

### **What answer does Jude give?**

Our text goes on to describe these ungodly, false teachers in great detail; (vs. 4-16) which parallels 2 Peter chapter 2 in many ways. This condition exists when believers tolerate those who hold to false teaching.

### **Jude's answer is to strengthen the believers with the Word of God.**

They must know the truth - what they believe, and why they believe it.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy he charges Timothy to preach and teach the Word of God in the face of the end-times, self-absorbed and corrupt people, as the best solution to the weak, nominal Christians who are easily swayed.

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus,  
 who is to judge the living and the dead,  
 and by His appearing and His kingdom:  
 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season;  
 reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.  
 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;  
 but wanting to have their ears tickled,  
 they will accumulate for themselves teachers  
 in accordance to their own desires,  
 and will turn away their ears from the truth  
 and will turn aside to myths.” (2 Tim.4:1-4).

**Testimonial** – a true story: A small evangelical church seemed to be alive.

The struggles of new leadership brought about a serious attitude problem.

On the part of the people there was a lot of complaining.

They were looking for a new thrill, something to fill an empty spot,  
 - a discouragement from an inattentive church leadership.

On the part of the leadership there was a sense of lording it over the people – dictating, enforce the rule to overcome any dissidents.

Young leadership misses the servant-leader role every time.

A man became a part of the leadership who held to strange doctrines and taught his small group. He seemed to be the most popular of the teachers, and was very friendly towards everyone [in contrast to other leaders including both pastors]. Soon his home fellowship began to have their own meetings (even while all-church meetings were being held).

Then the day came when they broke off from the church and took people with him to start their own church. Many people took advantage of the opportunity to leave the main church. The next Sunday the church had lost half its members and were left discouraged.

Their new fellowship didn't care that they had wounded so many people, and were delighted in their rebellion. Within two years their new fellowship had grown to over 100, and seemed to be thriving, until the floor dropped out from under them. Along with strange doctrines being taught, the leader was found to be in an adulterous relationship. Their church closed and bore no Christian fruit in the lives of the people and their families.

The original church has never recovered over the last 35 years, even though they have many good things going for them. They lost an entire generation – from 300 members and thriving to a somewhat stable 50+ people in average attendance.

The serious nature of false teachers along with leaders who patiently teach the Word, producing Christ-like fruit in the lives of its people, make all the difference. That church was my home church. That leader was my friend. I was one of the damaged ones, seeking phenomenon and experience instead of the pure word of God. When dreams were shattered and reality struck home, I nearly quit attending church, adding another really negative church experience to my life. Many of the people I knew did just that, but by the grace of God, I returned to my roots and became committed to Paul's charge to Timothy: "Preach the Word!"

To preach Christ and His word and to live, "Christ in me the hope of glory.