

The Book of Jude

1 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:

The author identifies himself as Jude, the brother of James. With a quick look at the letter written by James we find that Jude is also the half brother of Jesus.

Jude however, like James, presents himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ. A bondservant identifies a person in a permanent relationship of servitude to another. The will of the bondservant is all together consumed in the will of the other.

The recipients are those "called." The word is *kletos*. It is used in the New Testament to identify only the Jews who are appointed without implication of obedience to the call. It never is used to address Gentiles, lost or saved. When this word is used it always refers to Jews. The Jewish nation was selected by God to be His bride and required no response or action on their part. The fact is readily seen throughout the Old Testament. Regardless of the Jew's actions, God loved them. But Jude further identifies the specific Jews he is writing to when he uses the words "beloved of God the Father." This term is always used in the New Testament to identify those who have accepted the *agape* love that only comes from God the Father. It is a benevolent love which gives without conditions, but the gift given in love is what is needed and best, not what is wanted or asked for. This love only comes through the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Jude makes this plain when he states they are "kept for Jesus Christ." The word "kept" means *preserved through deliverance for something*. These are kept for Jesus Christ. Without Him, they would not be called "beloved."

2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

Jude offers a blessing by stating three things he desires to be multiplied to the recipient. First, "mercy." Mercy is the *special and immediate regard to the misery which is the consequence of sin*. Second is "peace." Peace is *the absence or end of strife*. Third is "love." The *agape* love we spoke of in verse 1. It is *benevolence by doing what the one who loves deems as needed by the one loved; not what the one loved desires*. It is an unselfish love only God can give. It is a love that you can give only if you have come to know and experience God through Jesus Christ.

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Jude states the purpose for the letter. It was to be a letter about their common salvation. This means their deliverance and preservation, which is inclusive of all the blessings of God. But instead Jude is writing to appeal to them to "contend earnestly for the faith." "Contend" means to *strive or struggle for*. Faith is the persuasion to which you are all together consumed. Jude states that this faith was delivered once for all to the Saints. The word "saints" means *holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated or holy ones*. These are the *beloved of God*.

4 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 reason for this letter is because certain persons have crept in unaware. A better translation would be "they have settled in along side." Jude states that these were "long

beforehand marked out for condemnation.” This does not mean they were predestined to condemnation by God. The term “long beforehand marked out” means *those who conscientiously made a decision that will lead to their condemnation*. Condemnation is the sentence of punishment or damnation.

Jude spells out the characteristics of these persons so you will know them. They are ungodly persons, meaning *they are without the true God*. This does not mean they are irreligious. But it does mean they are without God, which includes their immoral behavior. Next Jude says they have turned the grace of God into licentiousness. Grace is the gift of God given without expectation of return. Licentiousness is when one acknowledges no restraints, one who does whatever his unmanageable forwardness dictates. Finally Jude says, “they deny our only master Jesus Christ.” This simply means that they *do not know God and are lost or dead in their trespasses and sins*.

5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.

Jude begins to identify the “certain people around you.” They have slipped in along side the saints with their ungodly beliefs and actions. Jude calls on history to remind them of such people in the past, since history tends to repeat itself. The saints Jude wrote to fully knew what God had done to the ungodly before. Three historical examples are presented to remind the saints of just how these “certain people” have been handled in the past. In verse 5 Jude reminds the saints of those who participated in the Exodus only to be subsequently destroyed because of their unbelief. There are three times during the first two years of the Exodus that God issues punishment to destroy the unbelievers in the camp. Exodus 32:25-28 identifies the death of 3000 men. Numbers 16:20-35 lists 250 more men. Numbers 16:44-50 identifies 14,700. All of these deaths were brought about because the people reviled angelic majesties.

Jude used the word “saving” in this verse. We immediately have difficulty understanding how God can save them and then destroy them. This is due to our definition of and understanding of the word “saving.” But Jude doesn’t use the Greek word that matches our definition. The word he uses here means *to deliver out from temporal danger*. It has nothing to do with the deliverance from eternal spiritual danger and darkness.

6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

Next Jude wants them to remember the fallen angels who rejected authority. These angels are fallen spiritual messengers created by God. They left their original domain which means their *beginning or original purpose*. They also left their abode, which was their place of living around God’s throne. These angels were fallen because they sinned with Satan. God cast them out of heaven and put them into prison. They will face God’s judgment at the great judgment day. That day is called the Great White Throne Judgment.

7 Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Finally, Jude wants the saints to remember the cities that were destroyed by God because they defiled the flesh. He lists two reasons for their destruction. First, they indulged in gross immorality which means *they were given over to sexual sins*. Second, Jude says they went after strange flesh which means *unnatural sexual abominations not only with man but also with beasts, birds, etc.* God destroyed these cities as an example to make known that their

punishment would be by fire. This punishment by fire would be eternal. The people of the cities are now undergoing this punishment and their judgment began at their destruction.

8 Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

Jude says the people who have slipped in along side you are just like the three previous examples. They have defiled the flesh using the body for sinful ungodly purposes. They have rejected authority choosing to follow their own desires in opposition to their created purpose. And they have reviled angelic majesties, seeking their own glory only to blaspheme those who represent the one worthy of glory. They do these three horrible things by “dreaming” which means they spend time imagining or meditating on what they are going to do. Our legal system calls this *premeditation*.

Jude 1:9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

But who will judge these people? It is our human nature to want to rail down judgment on them. Jude however sheds a different light on who will judge them by calling to remembrance another historical event. It involves the angel Michael, the devil, Moses' dead body, and the Lord. Michael and the devil are arguing over Moses' dead body. It is interesting to note here that most arguments between good and evil are over dead bodies (things that do not produce life in Christ.) In fact, most church, family, and business arguments are over dead issues. These are the things that really do not matter. They are silly and insignificant. The important point here is that Michael did not dare pronounce a railing judgment against the devil. That was not his to do. It was the Lord's and no one else's. A railing judgment is where someone uses words that will bring about condemnation. Where does man fit into this? Psalms 8:4-5 reminds us that we are a little lower than the angel. We cannot fight the devil and win. We are lower than the angels and the devil is a fallen angel.

Michael said “The Lord rebuke you.” There are two Greek words translated “rebuke” in the New Testament. One is *elegcho* which is an effectual conviction that brings about a change. It stops the operation whether it changes the mind or not. They can not continue in their course of action.

The second word is *epitimaō*. This rebuke does absolutely nothing to stop the action. It is a word of conviction that has no effect on the person convicted. It neither changes his behavior, or stops, or puts him in prison, or stops his plan. He will continue to operate in spite of the word of conviction.

The word Jude uses here is the second word *epitimaō*. It means nothing to the one spoken to and brings no change. In other words, even the rebuke of the devil by the Lord will have no effect on the devil's work and plan. Rebuking the devil is a waste of words. And so it is with these certain persons who have crept into the congregation, rebuking them is a waste of words and will have no effect. They have made up their minds long beforehand.

Jude 1:10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.

These certain people have a major problem. They revile two things that will destroy them. First, they revile the things they do not understand. They do not understand spiritual things. In 2nd Corinthians 2:14 Paul elaborates on this problem. Paul says, “a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he can not

understand them because they are spiritually appraised.” These men may be religious but they do not have spiritual eyes to see spiritual things.

Second, they revile things they know by instinct. Instinct is God given to every animal. There are things about God that every man, lost or saved, knows by instinct and these men revile those things. In Romans 1:20, Paul identifies what every man knows by instinct. He says, “for since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” The certain persons revile these things. When they see the slightest hint of their impending doom, Jude says they react like unreasoning animals, viscous and mean.

As a child I had a dog named Spots. This dog loved me unconditionally. No matter how badly I treated him, I was his best friend. In the three years I had Spots he never once even attempted to bite me. I trusted the dog. I thought the dog knew there was always safety in my arms. One day I watched as Spots chased a car and accidentally slipped under the rear tire. Screaming and yelping, he crawled to the edge of the street. Crying, I ran and scooped him up in my arms. No sooner than I touched him, he began to bite me repeatedly. Before I could drop him to the ground I had over twenty separate bites from my face, down my arm, and on my thigh. I ran from him with fear. There was nothing I could do for him. When I first read this passage in my teens, my memory turned to that day. It was the day I learned what damage an unreasoning animal could do, and just how they would react. Jude’s point concerning these men is exactly the same. They react to God like unreasoning animals.

Jude 1:11 **Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.**

Woe to them Jude says. He compares them to three Old Testament references, they *way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the rebellion of Korah*. These three references illustrate in vivid detail the three prime evil sins of this world.

The way of Cain is found in the very beginning of our Old Testament. Genesis 4:3-17 tells the story of the *way of Cain*. He was the first born son of Adam and Eve, born outside the garden. (No children were born in the garden.) Cain was a farmer and his younger brother was a shepherd. In the course of time both brought offerings to the Lord from the sweat of their brow. Cain’s offering was most likely the most beautiful banquet of all with the spread of fruits and vegetables he had grown. Abel’s offering was the sacrifice of a spotless young lamb. The text states that the Lord was pleased with Abel’s offering and displeased with Cain’s. Cain was so upset that sin swelled up within him and he lusted to kill his brother. In the field, Cain killed Abel, trying to destroy his flesh. Cain could not kill his soul, but he could kill his flesh. This is an example of defiling the flesh.

Next Jude mentions *the error of Balaam*. The reference is found in Numbers 22. Balaam is a prophet of Israel. Balak, the king of Moab (not part of Israel) enlists Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam agrees to do so if Balak will fill his house with silver. With the deed done Balaam heads to curse Israel. On the way the Angel of the Lord comes with a sword in hand to slay Balaam. Balaam’s donkey saw the angel and turned off the road into a field. Balaam cursed and struck the donkey. The Angel of the Lord moved in front of Balaam in the field and the donkey turned into a narrow path. Balaam repeatedly beat and cursed the donkey. The Angel of the Lord moved in front of them where they could not move. Balaam struck the donkey again. The donkey opened his mouth and spoke saying, “why have you beat me these three times?” Balaam said because he had mocked him and if he had a sword he would kill him. The Angel of the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam. Balaam sees the Lord. The Lord says, “Had it not been for your donkey, I would have killed you.” Balaam had rushed headlong into error for pay. His eyes were blind and nothing was going to stop him, not even the Lord. But the Lord did stop him. This is an example of reviling angelic

majesties. Angelic majesties are those who speak for God. Balaam's error was "not listening to God's message."

The rebellion of Korah is found in Numbers 16. In this reference, Korah has been set up with certain priestly duties. Korah and his followers falsely thought they could take over Moses' place as leader in the wilderness. They started a rebellion and God punished them. The earth opened up and 250 men fell into the earth. They the earth closed up. This is an example of rejecting authority. Cain symbolized the lust of the flesh, Balaam symbolized the lust of the eye, and Korah symbolized the pride of life. The deceivers who have slipped into the congregation unaware all fall into one or more of these sins.

Jude 1:12 These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;

Jude describes the effects of these people on you, the church. First, they are hidden reefs. How deadly that is. Vessels on the sea of life can sail blindly into a wreck and never know what they hit because the reef is hidden deep under the visible surface.

Second, they are "hidden reefs" in "your love feast." God is love. Jesus is love. Christianity is love. Every time the church is together, it is a meeting of love. Worship is love for God. These men are in the church's worship.

Third, they feast among the church without fear. They should not be there, but they are. They do not fear being there.

Finally, they feast for themselves, not for God, not for others, but only for themselves. They destroy the church for themselves. You can identify these men by their fruit. They are "clouds without water, carried along by wind." This is a farmer's worst nightmare. They plant a field and wait for the rains. The gray clouds come and the farmer puts their hope and trust in that cloud to burst forth with a steady rain. But rain never comes. All their hopes are wasted hopes.

These men are "autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted." They are unable to reproduce themselves. Their future is doomed. Not only are they dying but there is no future life for them, no heritage.

Jude 1:13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

They are "wild waves on the sea, casting up their own shame like foam." If you have ever been to the beach after a storm you know that it is covered with foam and every sort of decaying matter that was once alive. The storm brings in garbage to the shore with all its filthy waste.

These men are "wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever." Like a star spinning aimlessly out of control, headed further away without direction. They are speeding deeper and deeper into the black darkness.

Jude 1:14-15 And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Enoch prophesied the doom of these people. He said the Lord will come with many thousand holy ones. These holy ones are his saints - you and I. The Lord will then execute judgment

on all the ungodly who have spoken against Him. These men are doomed and will be there to witness their punishment

Jude 1:16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their *own* lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of *gaining an advantage*.

Their methods of operation are easily recognized. First they are grumblers. As grumblers they are constantly finding fault and following their own lusts. Next, they are arrogant speakers who flatter people for the purpose of gaining an advantage. It is not wrong to truthfully edify and encourage the brother without expecting anything in return. But when it is done to gain an advantage, that is arrogant flattering, which is sin.

Jude 1:17-19 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, “In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

Now Jude calls to remembrance the words of the apostles. Jude was not an apostle, however he had a close knowledge of their teachings. The apostles in reference here are the 12 men who were selected by the Lord Himself as apostles. (*Thirteen when we count Judas Iscariot.*) The reference is a warning about these certain men in the “last time.”

The “last time” is a forth period of time just prior to the very “last day” of the church. The periods in the church are:

- 1 The Last Times
- 2 The Latter Times
- 3The Last Days
- 4 The Last Time
- 5The Last Day

The Last Times encompasses the entire church age. The Latter Times begins during the church age. The Last Days begins after the Latter Times starts and finally the period of the Last Time exists until the very Last Day, which is the day the church is snatched away. Each period is characterized by new and different characteristics added to the previously developed apostasy. These men are “mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” They are the ones who “cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.”

A mocker (**empaiktes**) is one who is a *derider*, or a *false teacher*. We would call this kind of person a “scoffer.” That is one who scoffs at the truths held by the church community and makes a mockery of those things by staying in the church and failing to hold to the truths. They insist on trying to change the teachings to meet their desire. They have an ungodly plan and they plan on accomplishing their plan, regardless of the teaching of the church!

These men cause divisions within the church. They’ve shipwrecked the vessel called the church. Instead of sailing straight for the port, these men have convinced many to sail a different direction and the church is divided in purpose. The lusts of these men is completely of the world and not of God.

They are “worldly minded.” They have no desire for Godly things even though they are very religious. The word is **psuchikos**, which means sensual. A sensual person does not control the desires of his own body. They want the ways of the world, not the ways of God. Paul says:

1 Thes. 4:3-8 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. ⁷For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. ⁸Consequently, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

Because of this, these certain men are “devoid of the spirit.” Jude says they are devoid of the Spirit and Paul indicates that the reason is because they have rejected the God who gives the Spirit. You cannot be a holy, sanctified vessel without the Spirit of God.

Jude 1: 20-23 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

Jude gives those who have the Spirit of God seven distinct instructions on what to do with these certain men. You are to:

- 1 build yourselves up on your most holy faith

Care should be taken here to understand that this is not “faith in your faith. Faith is your moral *conviction* (of *religious* truth, or the truthfulness of God), especially your *reliance* upon Christ for salvation. That’s faith. It is not that you can get something done because you think your faith can make it happen. That’s apostasy. You are to build upon your reliance upon Christ.

- 2 praying in the Holy Spirit

You build upon your most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit. This means that the desires and words spoken in prayer are those directed by the Holy Spirit. It is that you have allowed the Holy Spirit to speak to you so you will know the desires of God.

- 3 keep yourselves in the love of God

You build upon your most holy faith by keeping yourselves in the love of God. God always loves you, but some times you remove yourself and do not allow yourself to be the recipient of God’s love. Here Jude says to stay in the place where you are one who receives God’s love.

- 4 waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life

You build upon your most holy faith by waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. It is the longing for the day when the mercy of the Lord has sealed your salvation for all eternity. It is the time when sin and sorrow are no more for you.

- 5 have mercy on some, who are doubting

This is to make a difference in the lives of those who are without the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the bringing of these lost ones to the love of God. It is to have a gentle compassion with them. It is a gentle and tender act that will come easily.

- 6 save others, snatching them out of the fire

This is also where you make a difference in the lives of those who are without the Lord Jesus Christ. However, here it is not a gentle act. It is like snatching a prize possession that has fallen into a campfire. These are the ones who are headed towards the lake of fire because of following the teachings of these certain men in the last days.

- 7 on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

There are some that just can not be helped. Show these the compassion of the Lord, but do it carefully. Do not allow them to persuade you away from the truth. Stay away from the worldly things they do which have polluted their flesh. That is their immorality and sensual desires and ways.

Jude 1: 24-25 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, 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.

In the closing prayer Jude gives our only God and Savior glory, majesty, dominion, and authority forever. However this great Lord of ours provides two important things to us. First, he is able to “keep you from stumbling.” By building on your most holy faith, the Lord can keep you safe from the false teachings of these certain men.

Second, the Lord is able to “make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.” This is not something He forces you to do. This is what He does because of your relationship with Him. He sees you as blameless and with great joy.

Isaiah 1:18b “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.