

JUDE

INTRODUCTION

“To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen (Jude 24, 25)

Jude identifies himself as “the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” Jude and James were then the half brothers of our Lord but their earthly relationship to the Lord was secondary to the higher bond they had with our heavenly Master. None of Jesus’ family in the flesh believed in Him until after the resurrection—and Jude probably came to believe at the same time as Jesus’ other half brother, James (1 Cor. 15:7). Acts 1:14 tells us that Jesus’ brothers were part of the group in the upper room awaiting the Holy Spirit, and 1 Corinthians 9:5 states that “the brethren of the Lord” were known in the early church. Peter had already prophesied that false teachers and leaders would come (2 Peter 2:1-3; 3:3-4), and Jude, also, is warning his readers that the apostates were already on the scene! Jude apparently wrote to the same believers who had received Peter’s letters, for his desire was to stir them up, instructing them to take Peter’s warnings to heart. There are a number of parallels between Jude and 2 Peter which you will recognize as you study this fascinating, but often neglected letter.

Here note carefully Jude 3: “*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.*” Notice that he wrote to “exhort” them. In the Greek language, this word was used to describe a general giving orders to his army, and was considered in every sense “military.” Jude had planned to write about salvation (Jude 3), but the Holy Spirit changed his whole theme to one of “a call to arms”!

Our desire to study Jude is wholly compatible with the times in which we live—times of apostasy and falling away, and today there are also many false teachers. Western civilization, especially, needs to return to its knees and the principles of its early founders who followed Christ, for we recall that Christ Himself said, “When I come will I find faith?” He also taught us to “know” the wiles of the wicked one, and following this, we are to “put on the whole armor of faith, that ye may be able to stand.” We indeed have Jesus’ strong assurance “*that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Christ’s church)*” (Matthew 16:18).

Jude 1

The epistle is addressed "To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ" (1). If this language is too strong to apply to all Christians literally, it is well to remember that the Lord assumes that all the disciples of Christ are living up to their true standard. He speaks of them all, therefore, as "loved," "kept" and "called," because all ought to be conformed to this divine standard.

To be truly sanctified is not merely to be chosen and set apart as the people of God, but to be self-surrendered and wholly dedicated to Christ, and then really filled with the Holy Spirit, cleansed from sin, and conformed to the character of Jesus Christ.

But even after this experience we still need to be "kept." No blessing takes us out of the sphere of temptation, and the Christian's attitude is one of abiding and being "kept by Jesus Christ."

The expression "called" has reference, we believe, not so much to a spiritual experience, as to the divine purpose in each life, and the special ministry and service which God has for each of His children, to which we are called as the servants of Christ and for which we are specially enabled by the endowment of the Holy Spirit.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease?
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?

Isaac Watts

If you believe you are a dedicated Christian, speak to the call of this Scripture (Jude 1) and poem, and state what your answer to that call should be.

Jude 2-3

Jude reminds them that they must "contend" for this faith. The enemy will try to destroy it, either by discrediting the Word of God, or by keeping us from fully believing it. The apostle, therefore, means that "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" should be preserved in its integrity. There is no new Bible for modern times, and there is no part of the Old Bible that is obsolete. Are we believing, and living every bit of it and proving in our lives that Jesus Christ and His Word are "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8)?

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Charles Spurgeon once said, "I cannot endure false doctrine, however neatly it may be put before me. Would you have me eat poisoned meat because the dish is of the choicest ware?" **As saints of God today, what is our part in upholding truth and eradicating the false teachings? Besides the verses given below add your own verses to support your statement.**

Rom. 16:17-20 Phil. 1:9-11 Phil. 1:27-30 Phil. 2:12-17 Phil. 3:2-3 Phil. 3:7-11 Phil. 4:4-9 2 Tim. 2:15
2 John 6-11

Jude 4-19

Jude now proceeds to expose certain false brethren, whose pernicious influence is already defiling and subverting the Church. Peter had warned his readers that in the last days such mockers should come, and perhaps Jude is referring to Peter when he says, "But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, 'In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires' " (17-18). The book of Jude was evidently written after Peter, and the things which that apostle had intimated, had already come. Briefly summed up, the false teachers against whom he directs the larger portion of his epistle, were as follows:

1. Certain men had crept in unawares, and, through their personal and pernicious influence, error and sin were being communicated and circulated. The false seed consists not merely in false doctrine, but in living embodiments of it. It is error in an ungodly and wicked man which is Satan's choicest instrument of attack upon Christianity, and the adversary is always trying to sow these tares in the Lord's husbandry.

2. The particular character of their false teaching was to "change the grace of our God into a license for immorality" (4). They abused the doctrine of divine grace by proclaiming liberty to sin because of Christ's salvation. They especially encouraged and practiced the sin of moral uncleanness. Jude speaks of them again in the eighth verse as "dreamers" who "pollute their own bodies"; and in the 16th verse as "they follow their own evil desires." In the 10th verse he uses still more realistic language in describing their coarse and brutal depravity: "what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them."

3. The result of their teaching and their lives is to "deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord" (4). Elsewhere in the Scriptures we are reminded that men may confess Christ by their lips, but by their works deny Him.

4. These wicked men were also intolerant of all spiritual authority, self-willed and scornful of the restraints and the warnings of those that were over them in the Lord. They "reject authority and slander celestial beings" (8). Already, in the time of Paul, such men had risen, setting at naught his apostolic authority, ridiculing his peculiarities and infirmities, and claiming for themselves the highest spiritual authority as equally inspired and authorized to teach and command.

These false teachers were schismatics and tried to break up the peace and harmony of the Church. "These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit" (19). They claimed a higher sanctity and larger liberty and a loftier experience.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Using Jude 16-19, fill in the blanks below:

These are _____, _____, walking according to their own _____. And they mouth _____ words, flattering people to gain _____. The apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ told you that there would be _____ in the last time, who would walk according to their own _____. These are _____ persons, who cause _____, not having the _____.

Jude 20-21

But now Jude turns from this painful picture of wickedness and addresses to the saints one of the sweetest and loftiest messages in all this volume of inspiration. "But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life" (Jude 20-21).

1. He bids them build themselves up in their most holy faith. The same word "faith" which we notice in the beginning of the epistle is fundamental in Christian life and character as here portrayed. It is a process of building, but faith is the foundation of all. It is the same thought which Peter expresses in his second epistle: "For this very reason, make every effort to add to our faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love" (2 Peter 1:5-7). Christian life grows, not by adding one grace to another in our human character building, but by taking every grace directly from Jesus Christ Himself, and making each addition to the building an act of simple faith. We become complete in holiness simply by appropriating the life of Jesus, moment by moment, until He has become incarnate in all our actions and relationships.

2. Praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20) is the process by which our life is built up. It is a continual communion in the Spirit, a breathing out of self, a breathing in of Christ; and just as the human body grows by the exhaling of our exhausted breath and the inhaling of fresh life moment by moment, so the secret process of the soul's growth is a ceaseless fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit. Each moment brings some new need, and that need is transformed into a prayer, and that prayer into a grace, and that grace into an added element in our Christian character and life. There is not a moment in our conscious existence that we may not be thus occupied in communion, and there is not a thing that comes to us that should not be made an occasion for this unceasing habit of prayer.

3. "Keep yourselves in God's love" (21). Here we have the element in which we grow. It is a glorious tropical climate of divine love. It is ever warmed by the sunshine of His heart and illumined by the radiance of His smile. It does not mean our love to God, but it means our constant consciousness and recognition of His love to us. It is the same thought which the Lord Jesus expressed: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love" (John 15:9-10).

4. The last step in this beautiful ascent is hope. "As you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life" (Jude 21). That means looking for the coming of our Lord and for the glory that is to be brought unto us at His appearing. It is the uplook of a spirit that is ever gazing sunward, heavenward. How beautifully Dr. Bonar has expressed it:

My hopes are passing onward, upward,
And with my hopes my heart has gone;
My eyes are turning skyward,—sunward,

Where glory brightens 'round yon throne.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Try to add more to what has already been said about praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20).

Jude 22-23

For a moment Jude turns his thought toward the sinner, and he gives two very practical directions for service and soul-winning. "Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh" (Jude 22-23).

First, we are to save people by compassion. We must love souls if we would win them. And surely, if we realize their danger and their need, we shall understand the compassion of which the apostle speaks. We are to have great tenderness, gentleness and love, or we shall be little used in bringing men to God.

But there are others with whom we must take a different course, and sometimes the sternest measure is the kindest. It is said that Dwight Moody was once talking with an inquirer who tried him with his indifference. Mr. Moody broke away from him, saying, "I guess God can get along without you, if you can get along without Him." And for the remaining meeting Mr. Moody paid no attention to the man. First, the man's pride was wounded, but soon his conscience was aroused; and before the meeting was over, he himself came imploring the prayers of the evangelist. Sometimes we must use messages as severe as Jude's strong language expresses, "Snatch others from the fire and save them; . . . hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh" (23) and, making no compromise with sin or cowardice, press the soul right through to the most real and complete confession and renunciation of all sin as the only condition of the mercy and peace of God.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Explain the words in Jude 23 concerning the garment spotted by the flesh.

Jude 24-25

Finally, Jude closes with this beautiful doxology: "To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen" (24-25).

1. He speaks of "him that is able to keep you from falling." This is an inadequate translation. Literally it means from "stumbling." He is not only able to keep us from the great falls, but from the slightest missteps. Oh, let us claim this great and wonderful grace.

2. He is "able ... to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy" (24). This is His purpose. For this end He is taking us through all processes of His grace and all the discipline of His love. Some day we shall understand and thank Him for it all. Some day we will shine forth in the kingdom of our Father even as He, "without fault" or "without blemish," which the original word literally means.

3. He is here described as "the only God our Savior." This is a glorious name and it is given to Jesus, the Son of man, our blessed Savior. Let us adore His glorious majesty as well as love His wondrous grace.

4. To Him "be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen" (25).

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

From these last two verses, comment on what God's purpose is for you.

Is this purpose opposite to the purpose of those ungodly men spoken of in Jude 4-19?

