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**THE BOOK OF JUDE****Lesson One****Introduction**

*“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 1-3*

**I. THE INTRODUCTION:****1. Its Structure and Characteristics - “Jude”.**

Jude is the seventh and last of the General Epistles. By General we mean it was not written to a particular church so named. It is the next to last book in the Bible. It is a short book containing only 458 words fitted into 25 verses. In spite of its short length it is very important. The beginning of the Apostolic Age is described in the Acts of the Apostles. The end of the Apostolic Age is dealt with in the Book of Jude, which has been entitled “The Acts of the Apostates.” While the book of Acts describes the teachings and deeds of men of God who began to build up the church, the book of Jude records the teachings and deeds of evil men who soon began to destroy and tear down the church.

**A. It’s theme:**

The theme of Jude is set forth in verses 3 and 4. It is “contending for the faith in the midst of apostasy.” The Old Testament had predicted that under the age and rule of the Messiah, He would have enemies which would oppose His kingdom. In Psalm 110:1,2 we read, *“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”* Jesus forewarned His disciples what they would encounter in the future. In Matthew 24:11-13 He said, *“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”* Also in verses 24 and 25 we further read, *“For there shall arise false Christs,*

*and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before."*

The Messianic Age is not only called the Kingdom of Christ, it is also described as the "last days." It covers the entire church age. In Hebrews 1:1,2 it reads, *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."* The Apostle Paul indicated in I Timothy 4:1 that during the Gospel Age many would apostatize or depart from the faith. *"Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."* In II Timothy 3 he further warned that *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."* (verse 1). By this he means times of great moral apostasy. He says that *"men shall be lovers of their own selves"* (verse 2). They will be *"despisers of those that are good."* (verse 3), *"lovers of pleasures more than of God."* (verse 4). They will have *"a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."* (verse 5). As the truth of God advances, so shall the lies of Satan follow. We read in verse 13 that *"evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."*

Paul informs us that this apostasy or departure from the faith is Satan's strategy for counteracting the truth of God. In II Timothy 3:8 he says, *"Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."* He then informs Timothy to expect to encounter this in the life span of his own ministry. In II Timothy 4:2-4 he says, *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."*

The word "apostasy" means "a falling away, a revolt or defection from the truth of God." It is translated "forsake" in Acts 21:21 where the Jews said that Paul was teaching the Gentiles to "forsake Moses". It is such an occurrence that Jude was fighting in his short letter. False teachers had entered into the church and were distorting the truth of the faith.

**B. Its Date - approximately 65 - 80 A.D.**

**C. Its Structure and Outline:**

PART I: JUDE'S AIM, vs. 1-3

- (1) Writer and Recipients (v. 1)
- (2) A Prayerful Blessing (v. 2)
- (3) A Purpose Explained (v. 3)

PART II: JUDE'S ARGUMENT (Heretics Described)(vs. 4-19).

- (1) Three Distinguishing Features (v. 4)
  - (a) Ungodly
  - (b) Lawless
  - (c) Deniers of God
- (2) Three Examples of God's Judgment (vs 5-7)
  - (a) Israel in the Desert (v. 5)
  - (b) Angels that Sinned (v. 6)
  - (c) Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7)
- (3) Three Main Sins (vs. 8-10)
  - (a) Dreamers or Visionaries (v. 8)
  - (b) Defilers of the Body (v. 8)
  - (c) Despisers of Authority (vs. 8-10)
- (4) Three Examples of Error (v. 11)
  - (a) The Self-Will Way of Cain (v. 11)
  - (b) The Greed of Balaam (v. 11)
  - (c) The Rebellion of Core (Korah) (v. 11)
- (5) Five Images or Illustrations From Nature (vs. 12, 13)
  - (a) A Spotted Blemish (v. 12)
  - (b) Clouds Without Rain (v. 12)
  - (c) Trees Without Fruit (v. 12)
  - (d) Strong Waves of the Sea (v. 13)
  - (e) Falling Stars (v. 13)
- (6) The Prophecy of Enoch (vs. 14-16)
- (7) The Prophecies of the Apostles (vs. 17-19)

## PART III: JUDE'S ADMONITION (Believers Exhorted)(vs. 20-25)

- (1) Three Exhortations (vs. 20, 21)
  - (a) Build Yourself Up (v. 20)
  - (b) Pray In the Spirit (v. 20)
  - (c) Abide in God's Love (v. 21)
- (2) Three Attitudes For Ministry (vs. 22-23)
  - (a) Compassion (v. 22)
  - (b) Fear (v. 23)
  - (c) Boldness (v. 23)
- (3) A Closing Doxology (vs. 24, 25)

There is a clear order of thought running through the book. Its central idea is that of contending for the faith as expressed in verse 3. The first nineteen verses tell us why we are to contend: because of apostate teachers. The remaining five verses show us how to contend: the resources we are to use in contending.

2. **Its Author - "*Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James.*"**

a. **His name - "*Jude*"**

Jude was a common name. It means "praise." It was first used in the Old Testament as Judah, a son of Jacob and head of the tribe of Judah. Jude is the English variant of "Judas". We distinguish Jude, the writer of this epistle from Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. It is ironic that the one book in the New Testament which so vividly describes apostasy bears the same name as the greatest apostate in Scriptures, Judas Iscariot.

b. **His ministry - "*servant of Jesus Christ.*"**

Here we are given the title and attitude of mind that identifies a true believer and gospel minister. Before Jude will identify the apostate imitators, he will first describe the true item. The word "servant" means a bond-slave. It conveys the idea that Christians have been bought by Jesus Christ from the slavery of sin, and are now set free, not to serve themselves

but to become the slaves of Christ. We read in I Corinthians 7:22-23 it says, **“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.”** A true minister of Christ will serve the cause of Christ. An apostate will use the cause of Christ to serve his own self-ends. In verse 12 of Jude the King James Version describes the apostates as **“feeding themselves without fear.”** The marginal reading has it “shepherds that without fear feed themselves.” They are self-serving. How contrary to Jesus’ command to Peter **“Feed my sheep.”** (John 21:16). Those who love Christ will serve His people and cause. Those who do not love Christ will use Christ’s people to advance themselves.

Ever so often a Christian should reflect on these scriptures:

**“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.” - John 12:26**

**“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” - Col. 3:23,24**

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” - Romans 12:1,2**

**c. His identity - the “brother of James”**

Jude identifies himself as the brother of James. Who is James? What James would be so well known that all the believers of the first century would know him by his first name? There is only one such James, the James who was the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ. The James who was the pastor of the great Jerusalem church, the mother church of Christianity. This would make Jude also the brother of Jesus.

Contrary of Roman Catholic teaching, Joseph and Mary had other children after Jesus was born. This truth is implied in Matthew 1:25 which says of Joseph that **“he knew her not till she**

***had brought forth her first born son: and he called his name Jesus.*** It is explicitly stated in Luke's description of Jesus that Mary ***"brought forth her firstborn son"*** (Luke 2:7). In Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 it is clearly stated that Jesus had both brothers and sisters, and the names of His brothers are listed. Mark 6:3 reads, ***"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?"*** The brother, "Juda" is the writer of the epistle we are presently studying.

It is surprising to be told that during His earthly life none of Jesus' brothers believed He was the Son of God who came to earth to be the Savior of men. In John 7:3-5 we read, ***"His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest . . . If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him."*** The story does have a good outcome. We find after the resurrection of Jesus that His brothers met with the 120 in the upper room for prayer (Acts 1:14). What had caused the change from unbelief to faith? In I Corinthians 15:7 it states that Jesus appeared to James after His resurrection. There we read, ***"After that, he was seen of James, then of all the apostles."*** It is probable that Jude was converted at this time also and became a traveling preacher with Paul as hinted in I Corinthians 9:5.

**d. His Humility *"servant of Jesus Christ; and brother of James"*.**

Notice the humility of this man. He boasts not of his physical relationship with his brother Jesus, but his spiritual relationship to Him as a servant. Neither is any hint of jealousy toward his famous brother James. Jude was neither jealous nor resentful. He was a true example of a minister of God. He walked humbly before God, and among the believers of God, just being thankful that God had called him to serve His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to serve Him in whatever capacity God felt best to assign him. So a true believer, identified by men, is one who humbly serves the will of Jesus Christ by giving away his life to minister the teaching of Christ to others.

3. **Its recipients - *"Them that are sanctified by God the Father* (loved by God the Father), ***and preserved in*** (kept by) ***Christ Jesus, and called."*****

While we do not know the exact identity of these believers, from the contents of the book, it would have been necessary for them to be well familiar with the Old Testament scriptures. They were

probably Jewish converts to Christianity. We are here introduced, at the outset of this letter, to Jude's fondness for expressing his thoughts in "triads" or parts of three. He does so throughout the letter. cf. Verse 2, "**Mercy . . . peace . . . love.**"

After identifying a true believer from the human side, Jude now traces a believer's origin back to the activity of God. He is now showing that a Christian is a workmanship of God. The marginal reading in the King James Version follows the translations found in the New American Standard Version and the New International Version. It reads "**to those who are the called ones, beloved in God the Father, and preserved or kept for or in Jesus Christ.**"

**a. The called ones**

Notice that the word "called" appears at the end of the verse in the KJV. It is positioned so in the Greek usage for emphasis. When translated into modern English, the word "called" is placed first because we emphasize what is first. A Christian is someone who has been called by God. Kenneth Wuest says of the word:

"It is an adjective used to describe those who were called in the sense of being invited, for instance, to a banquet. The word here speaks of that effectual call of God whereby the sinner called to salvation is constituted willing to receive that which he by nature rejects, namely, salvation, this being the pre-salvation work of the Holy Spirit, in which He brings the sinner to the place of repentance and the act of faith in the Lord Jesus as Savior." (Wuest, *Word Studies: Jude*, pp. 232, 233).

**b. Loved and set apart by God.**

Some of the Greek texts have the word "loved" and others have the word "sanctified." The full truth of the matter is that the God of love sanctified or set apart His special love upon these people. The perfect tense is used here to describe the fact that this love was positioned upon them in the past and continues unto the present, denoting that they are the permanent objects of His love, and that love extends not only through this brief span of life, but on into the future eternity.

**c. Preserved or kept in and for Christ.**

The word “preserved” means “to guard, to keep, to hold firmly.” It is again in the perfect tense. These are being kept under the watchful care of God so as to guard them from permanent harm.

A full paraphrase of these three activities of God for and within the lives of His own would be such: “Those who are called have been loved by God the Father and are in a state of being the permanent objects of His love, are in and for Christ being watched over and permanently being guarded from destruction.”

This means they cannot apostatize for they are being preserved as a seed for the honor of Christ. They shall persevere in holiness unto the end and be saved.

The evidence for this teaching is supported by Jesus in John 10:28, 29 where He says, **“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”** Also in II Timothy 4:18 Paul believed that, **“the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”** That is some promise is it not? And Jude would close his epistle in the same way, **“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”**

**4. Its blessing - “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.”**

Jude prays for three blessings to be abundantly supplied to these saints. How is it that Jesus is able **“to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him?”** Because **“he ever lives to make intercession for them!”** (Hebrews 7:25). The means by which God preserves His saints is through the merits of Christ being channeled to the saints through the work of the Holy Spirit imparting among other things, mercy, peace, and love. What does this do? It keeps the saints from final apostasy.

What could separate a saint from God? Could it be sin? No, because whenever sin appears, God pours out more mercy to produce forgiveness. Titus 3:5,6 says, **“Not by works of righteousness which we**



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*have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior;”*

What about the possibility of circumstances causing us to doubt God and lose our assurance? No, if that happens, He restores unto us the joy of our salvation and gives peace in our soul. When this occurs then we read in Philippians 4:7, *“And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

What if one of the saints should leave their first love? Then God’s love would be multiplied unto him in whatever he lacks. God will take up the slack to supply his need. Christ will send forth a fresh supply of the Spirit resulting in the event of the *“love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* - Romans 5:5

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* - Romans 8:35, 37-39

5. **Its purpose** - *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”*

a. **Jude’s preference** - **to write about salvation.**

One is given the idea that Jude had originally intended to write a letter containing a positive presentation of the teachings of the Christian faith. The common salvation is that which all true believers share in alike. No believer is more saved than another or less saved than another believer. We are all saved by grace through faith in Christ. Jude’s name means “praise” and he was anxious to praise God and rejoice in the salvation God gives in Jesus Christ. I must confess in my own ministry, I would rather encourage the saints rather than fight the apostates. But this is not always possible. Those ministers and churches that neglect the fight do so at their own peril. We live in a time when the “praise service” has

become popular. At the same time the doctrinal sermon exposing error has become unpopular. It is no accident that heresy or false teachings abound in this atmosphere.

**b. Jude's plea - *"earnestly contend for the faith."***

In spite of Jude's good intention to praise God for our salvation, the Holy Spirit intervened and he felt constrained to write a letter dealing with the need to engage in warfare. The enemy was within the ranks of the church. The word, "contend" means "to fight for something with great strength." The Christian life is a battleground, not a playground. We are in a warfare for the purity of the faith. Paul told Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith." (II Timothy 4:7). He who loves the truth must hate error.

The faith spoken of is not the subjective faith that the believer has experienced in Christ, but refers to the objective body of Christian doctrine that has come from Christ and His apostles and has been completed once and for all. Beware of those who would want to add some new revelation to this body of truth. God has spoken and sealed up the book. Now we must proclaim it and defend it from error.

A church must use a trowel to build up the saints in the faith and a sword to cut down the apostate who would destroy the faith. The church that will not stand against error will soon be penetrated with apostates who will fight the doctrines of the faith. Apostasy will continue until Jesus returns. Thus let us continue to fight against it. Let us love the truth for God's Word is truth!

The tone has now been set for the book. Next time we will begin to identify the apostates who have left the faith.