

Jude

This is the third lesson in the somewhat loose series that we are looking at on an analytical study of the various books of the New Testament. **1** The book of Jude is considered the last in the order of the universal epistles. Very basically, the term universal epistles refers to the epistles beginning with Hebrews and including first and second Peter, first, second, and third John, and Jude. The first four books are the Gospels, the record of Jesus, His coming to Earth, His life, and His death, burial, and resurrection.

Again, as a quick reminder, and as I will with each of these lessons, keep in mind the rules of Bible study...

- 2**
- A) Who is writing?
What do we know about the writer, if anything?
 - B) Who are they writing to?
What do we know about the target audience? Things like location, traditions, political atmosphere at the time of the writing, religious atmosphere.
 - C) What is the context?
What is the writer discussing?
 - D) What do other passages say about the same subject?
What does God say about the topic?

So first...

3 *Who is Writing?*

The writer of this epistle calls himself...

As we take a quick look at this affirmation we notice a couple of things. Jude opens the book indicating that he is a "*servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James*". The question of Jude's identity is intricately linked with the identity of James, who the author lists as his brother. We can easily eliminate James the son of Zebedee because he was martyred early in church history...

Acts 12:1

4

1 Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. **2** And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

The only other viable James is Jesus' brother.

Mark 6:3

5

3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

This passage highlights a few facts. First, James and Jude were Jesus' brothers. Second, they were both known by the church. If this is the case, then it stands to reason that Jude would identify himself as James' brother since James was an influential leader in the Jerusalem church. Some even call him the "Leader of the Church at Jerusalem," though I find that to be an inaccurate description. He may very well have been one of the elders but no one man is ever the leader of a Church of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jude the brother of James and Jesus is the most viable candidate to have authored this book. Jude humbly designated himself only as the brother of James

and a servant of Christ rather than try to elevate himself to any kind of significance as the brother of Jesus.

Whether or not this Jude is an apostle is based on one's understanding of the connections in the names. As he is the brother of James and Jesus, that eliminates James, the son of Zebedee, as well as James, who Mark calls the less, who was the son of Alphaeus. Obviously Jude's brother James was the son of Joseph. Many assume that the Thaddeus of Matthew 10:3 is another name for Jude or Judas. We have no scriptural evidence of this and nowhere does Jude identify himself any other way than as the brother of James. Whether or not he was the Apostle Thaddeus or not is opinion, but it really doesn't change anything.

The following is an excerpt from Erdman's Bible dictionary...

As to the date of when it was written, Jude is a difficult book to date. Since he deals with false teachings that had entered the church, one would think that a later date would be more feasible. However, he does not discuss Gnosticism outright. Thus, many have theorized a date between AD 65 and 80. The thing is that there are few, if any, external grounds of evidence for deciding the actual date and the internal evidence is just as small. The question of date is connected by many scholars with that of its relationship to 2 Peter, and an earlier or later period has been assigned to it according as it has been considered to have been anterior or posterior to that epistle. That means that depending on whether you think it was written before or after 2 Peter. Attempts have also been made to prove a late date for the epistle, from an alleged quotation in it from the apocryphal book of Enoch (verse 13); but it is by no means certain that the passage is a quotation from the now extant book of Enoch, and scholars have yet to settle when the book of Enoch was written; so that from this nothing can be inferred as to the date of this epistle. From the allusion, however, to the preaching of the Apostles, we may infer that it was among the later productions of the Apostolic age; for it was written while people were still alive who had heard the Apostles preach, but when this preaching was beginning to become a thing of the past...

Jude 17-18

6

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, **18** that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."

On the other hand, again, if our acceptance of the fact that the author is really the brother of Jesus, we cannot well suppose him to have lived much beyond the middle to the later part of the first century, we may therefore come to a fair conclusion and place it about A.D. 66.

There is even less information from which to determine the place of writing. Burton, however, is of the opinion that inasmuch as the descendants of "Judas, the brother of the Lord," if we identify him with the author of the epistle, were found in Palestine, he probably "did not absent himself long from his native country," and that the epistle was published there, since he styles himself "the brother of James," an expression most likely to be used in a country where James was well known.

So, the next point is...

7

Who is being Written to?

The epistle is addressed to Christians in general...

Jude 1

8

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***

Its design is to put Christians on guard against the deceiving efforts of those that are false-teachers. The style of the epistle is that of an "***impassioned invective***". Note the pace at which the

writer is hurried along, collecting example after example of divine vengeance on the ungodly; heaping epithet upon epithet, and image upon image, and, as it were, laboring for words and images strong enough to depict the polluted character of the licentious apostates against whom he is warning the Church and Christians. Jude keeps coming back to this subject of false teachers, unbelievers, its as if he is struggling to find the words to adequately express the vileness of unfaithfulness and apostasy, let alone his burning hatred of their perversion of the doctrines of the gospel."

Jude is a perfect example for all Christians as to how they should respond to any false teaching. We all understand that any acceptance or condoning of error is sin. But I sometimes wonder if my reaction to the false teaching that is so prevalent in the world today is strong enough. Does it measure up to what I see in Jude? Oh, we denounce the deception of the religious world, the fallacy of I'm ok, you're ok form of acceptance that is being taught today. This absolutely removes the authority of the scriptures, God's Word. It doesn't matter that God says...

Eph 4:1-6

9

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, **3** being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

There is only one calling, one baptism, and one faith. Anything that teaches anything different is a lie, a deception, it is the false teaching that Jude is speaking against. The point is that if we allow ourselves to seem to condone it or accept it with our friends, the people we meet, or even our family, we sin. That is what Jude is saying to all Christians. This brings us to our next point...

10

What is the Context?

We just touched on this a little bit...

The purpose which the writer had in view is stated by himself.

Jude 3

11

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 handed down to the saints.

Jude says that, he intended to write to them "of the common salvation,". This can only be understood to mean that Jude included himself in that idea of a...

12

"Common Salvation"

He seems to find himself compelled to write a solemn warning in defense of the faith. A faith that he sees imperiled by corrupt men...

Jude 4

13

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.

Notice what Jude says here...

14

"Certain Men have crept in Unawares"

The false teachers had insinuated themselves into the Church and begun to infiltrate their teaching into the doctrine of the scriptures. And now the canker of their deception is showing itself. That error of deceit must be met promptly and resolutely. So Jude denounces those who turned the grace of God "into lasciviousness," virtually denying God by disobeying his law. He illustrates this deception with three examples of this same type of sin and its punishment...

15 1) The Israelites that sinned in the wilderness

Jude 5

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.

16 2) The angels that "kept not their first estate;"

Jude 6

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,

17 3) The foul cities of Sodom and Gomorrah

Jude 7

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.

After illustrating the sin of the Israelites, the angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah Jude makes the connection between those obvious sins and the false teachers he is exposing...

Jude 8

18

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

Jude goes to great lengths to describe these deceivers. Read with me what he says beginning in...

Jude 10-13

19

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. **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. **12** These are the men 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; **13** wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

Not a very pretty description of these deceivers. But Jude goes on to tell what will become of these men...

Jude 14-16

20

14 It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, **15** 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." **16** These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

Then, Jude, addressing the faithful Christians, reminds them that the apostles had forewarned them that evil men would rise in the Church. In the passage that we already looked at in...

Jude 17-18 21

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, **18** that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." **19** These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

Jude exhorts the Christians to maintain their own steadfastness...

Jude 20-21 22

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Here is the real impact of the book of Jude. Build yourself up on, in, your faith. Pray to God, keep in His love and be patient in waiting for the coming of Christ. You want to know how to fend off false teaching and the error of deception. Build yourself up in your faith. There is only way to accomplish that. Remember Rom. 10:17 tells us that faith comes from hearing God's Word and in...

2 Tim 2:15 23

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Jude is powerful in its teaching and moving in its illustration of commitment for the Lord and the Word. We need to understand that we cannot be quiet in the face of error and false teaching. We need to be patient and endure in our faith as we wait for the coming of our Lord and eternal life. We need to grow in the Love of God and show that love in our love for each other, being able to discern right from wrong...

Jude 22-23 24

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; **23** save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

That discernment comes from knowing the Word of God and applying it in our lives, being steadfast in our faith.

Jude's exhortations are addressed to Christians everywhere. They are addressed to you and I. One of the points that he makes is that we are to do these things in our preparation for the coming of the Lord that we might inherit eternal life. But friends there is no inheritance for those who have not come to God on His terms, through Christ, in faithful obedience to His Word. There is no other way.

Rom 1:16 25

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

And we see in **Acts 4:12**, there is no other name under heaven, except that of Jesus the Christ by which we can be saved. The question is, do you want to be saved?