

Jude

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There are several Judes or Judas in the New Testament, but this one appears to be the half-brother of Jesus. He identifies himself as the brother of James. The well-known James was the Lord's half-brother. Following the pattern of James, he did not mention his family relationship with Jesus.

It is a marvel that the brothers of Jesus switched from being His opponents to being His advocates. This, alone, is a powerful argument for the truth of the resurrection. Luke is speaking about the eleven Apostles (Judas had taken his life) when he wrote:

They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus. Acts 1:14

So James and Jude came to the party late, but they came and left their Spirit-inspired writings for posterity.

Judas saw that false teachers were boldly teaching their heresies in the meetings of the congregations. These men were also very immoral in conduct and the letter is written to expose their errors and to exhort his readers to contend for the true faith and to live worthy lives. In many points it is very similar to the second letter of Peter.

The reader may want to look for the *triads* or groups of three in Jude. In verse one below, note *Jude, slave, brother*. In verse 2: *Mercy, peace and love*.

(Jude 1) This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. I am writing to all who have been called by God the Father, who loves you and keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ. (2) May God give you more and more mercy, peace, and love.

A. Jude's ID

- Compare the first sentence of the Book of James:

This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. James 1:1

Jude might have looked at the Book of James before he wrote. There will be more reasons to think that as we continue. So we believe that Jude, like James, is a half-brother of Jesus.

Jude was a man content with the second place. He was not nearly so well known as James; and he is content to be known as the brother of James. In this he was the same as Andrew. Andrew is Simon Peter's brother (John 6:8). He, too, was described by his relationship to a more famous brother. **Jude** and Andrew might well have been resentful of the brothers in whose shadow they had to live; but both had the great gift of gladly taking the second place.

B. Jude's Target Audience

- **Jude** is writing to **all who have been called by God**. We are called by the message of the gospel.
- Believers are **loved by God** and **kept safe** in the **care of Jesus Christ**. **Jude** speaks of the **mercy, peace** and **love** of the **Father**. God is not a distant principle but a very present and caring **Father**.

(3) Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to His holy people.

A. Jude's Original Plan

- Jude was going to write about the **salvation** that we hold in common. That would have been a rich epistle and a beneficial read.
- Jude may never have gotten around to writing his originally planned letter, but this new choice is the one that God used.

B. Jude's Alternate Plan

- A falsehood has reared its ugly head and that must be addressed right now. Further, Jude's readers must take action to **defend the faith** against the false teachers.

C. God Has Entrusted His Truth to Men

- The facts of the faith are something which we have not discovered for ourselves. It is not left to mankind to adjust the message for changing times.
- It is clear that the design of the message of God is not to be flexible and subject to constant change. This is in accord with other writers who spoke of the unbendable quality of God's message.
- This is similar to Paul in 2 Timothy 2:15:

Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.

- In verse one, we learn that God keeps us safe, while here in verse 3 we need to be proactive about staying in the **faith**. This goes way beyond attending a church assembly weekly.

(4) I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

A. Change Among The Churches

- The churches had been growing and growth attracts individuals wanting to take advantage of the sincere people that haven't learned to sort out false teaching from the truth. The false teachers aren't capable of winning people to Christ on their own. They want to prey on the uninformed. These false teachers were saying that God's **grace** would cover **immoral living** by believers. Since the **grace** of God was wide enough to cover any sin,

a man could sin as he liked. The more he sinned, the greater the grace, therefore, why worry about sin? Grace was being perverted into a justification for sin.

- **William Barclay** explains the Greek word behind **wormed**:

(It) is a very expressive word. It is used of the spacious and seductive words of a clever pleader seeping gradually into the minds of a judge and jury; it is used of an outlaw slipping secretly back into the country from which he has been expelled; it is used of the slow and subtle entry of innovations into the life of state, which in the end undermine and break down the ancestral laws. It always indicates a stealthy insinuation of something evil into a society or situation.

A. Condemnation Of The Teachers

- These false teachers are **denying Christ** and stand **condemned** before God.

(5) So I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, but later He destroyed those who did not remain faithful.

A. Reminding Is Needed

- The Spirit-inspired men stressed remembering the past, not continually looking for new truths. Peter and James made the same point in their writings. Most certainly, Jude's letter will be read by these wicked teachers. They, too, will be **reminded**.

B. Israel Was Rescued

- Back in verse 4, Jude said that Jesus was the only Lord. Many translations say the Lord rescued them, but Jesus is the only Lord, so it is true that Jesus rescued Israel. Consider:

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. John 1:3

Clearly, before Jesus came to earth and was born of Mary, He had been very busy.

C. The Unfaithful Were Destroyed

- Some among those rescued did not remain **faithful** to the Lord and were **destroyed**. The implication is that will happen to anyone now who does not continue to follow the Lord.

(6) And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment.

A. Remember The Angels

- First the illustration of Israel, now the illustration of the **angels**. The readers had to have learned the stories before they could remember them. We must use some of our time to learn Scripture as well.

B. There Will Be a Judgment Day

- The Scriptures speak of a coming **Day of Judgment**:

For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgment. 2 Peter 2:4

(7) And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment. (8) In the same way, these people — who claim authority from their dreams — live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings.

A. Remember Sodom

- The third example to remember is **Sodom** and **Gomorrah**. Some of Jude's readers may have known right where **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** used to be. Their leading sins were immorality and perversion.

Present-day advocates claim that Sodom's sin was lack of hospitality, but Jude hadn't read the memo.

B. These False Teachers Will Be Punished

- The cities were **destroyed by fire** as a warning to others of the eternal fire that is coming at **Judgment**.

(9) But even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, did not dare accuse the devil of blasphemy, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (This took place when Michael was arguing with the devil about Moses' body.)

A. The Angel Michael Used Care

- **Michael** was known to readers of the Old Testament Scriptures.

.... Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. Daniel 10:13

Michael left the judgment of the enemies of the Lord to the Lord himself. But these false teachers judge whoever stands in the way of their destructive goals. It is the Lord who makes the true judgment calls and they are righteous.

B. A Celestial Argument

- We are not told about this **argument** elsewhere. This writer accepts it because Jude is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- **Donald Fream** makes a very useful statement here:
 What a lesson for us in this! How often are we tempted to both determine the inner thoughts of our fellow man and then to pronounce the judgment?
 Like Jonah we sit under a bush and pout because judgment does not come in a manner we choose, or at the time we choose, or to the person we choose.

(10) But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. (11)

What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion.

A. The False Teachers Are Scoffers

- They don't consider others but do the put-down on any questioning of their teaching.
- They are driven by their feelings and this will lead them to **destruction**.

B. Their Forerunners

The scoffers were not the first of their kind. Consider Biblical history:

- **Cain.** Because he killed his brother, he was driven from the land that he loved to cultivate and wandered the earth. He hated his brother, refused to obey God and it led him to murder.
- **Balaam.** He was a prophet for hire, not respected and eventually killed.

All five of the Midianite kings—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—died in the battle. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.

Numbers 31:8

While **Cain** was driven by hatred, **Balaam** was driven by his desire for money.

- **Korah.** He challenged the Lord's handpicked man and led a rebellion that led to his untimely death. He was envious and jealous of the authority God gave to Moses and Aaron; so he presumed to share in that authority.

(12) When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain.

They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots. (13) They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their shameful deeds. They are like wandering stars, doomed forever to blackest darkness.

A. The False Teachers Are Friendly and Sociable

- The Church of Jude's time had **fellowship meals** and **commemorated the Lord's love**. The false teachers were there promoting their views. But they are rocks that will sink your ship.

B. The False Teachers are Dangerous

- **Shameless shepherds**. They are present to fleece the sheep instead of supporting them.
- Empty **clouds**. Farmers depended on rain. These false teachers looked like rain clouds, but they were empty. Lots of words and lots of promises.
- Fruitless **trees**. Promises, but not real fruit.
- Wild **waves**. Waves that bring up all kinds of trash and scum.
- **Wandering stars**. Stars that do not fit the normal plan of display set up by the Lord.

Donald Fream makes a painful application:

Today, however, the very home itself has become a spawning area for all kinds of filth. Magazines that contain all kinds and all amounts of sex are often carried, even through the mails, into the home. The television set has become a "living" fixture in the home that carries death through sensuality as many as twenty or more hours in every day. Spirituality is lost in the sensual desire for the sensuous programs.

(14) Enoch, who lived in the seventh generation after Adam, prophesied about these people. He said, "Listen! The Lord is coming with countless thousands of His holy ones (15) to execute judgment on the people of the world. He will convict

every person of all the ungodly things they have done and for all the insults that ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

A. Enoch Identified

- The Genesis record reports two men named **Enoch**, one being a son of Cain. This **Enoch** is the father of Methuselah. He prophesied about the coming **Judgment**.

B. Enoch Quoted

- The Prophet Jude is quoting a prophet from near the beginning of time and saying that an overwhelming group of **holy ones** will come to **execute Judgment**. No fast-talking false teacher will escape.
Similar statements are in the *Book of Enoch*, an apocryphal source that may have been available this early, but their presence in an outside writing does not mean that Jude was quoting from there.
- Daniel saw a similar scene:

I watched as thrones were put in place and the Ancient One sat down to judge. His clothing was as white as snow, His hair like purest wool. He sat on a fiery throne with wheels of blazing fire, and a river of fire was pouring out, flowing from His presence. Millions of angels ministered to Him; many millions stood to attend Him. Then the court began its session, and the books were opened.

Daniel 7:9-10

Jude says these spiritual troublemakers won't be able to call 911 for help.

(16) These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want.

A. Grumblers And Complainers

- The underlying motive of the false teachers is to **satisfy their desires**. The Lord was not first in their lives.

B. Braggers And Flatterers

- Lacking the day-to-day blessings of the Lord, they used other methods to achieve their personal goals including **bragging** on themselves and **flattering** their listeners.

To flatter friends is to lay a trap for their feet.

Proverbs 29:5

(17) But you, my dear friends, must remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said. (18) They told you that in the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires.

A. More To Remember

- As mentioned frequently in the later letters from prophets and apostles, **remember** important truths. Success in Christian living relies heavily on remembering what God has already said.

B. The Apostles Have Spoken

- The true church is built on the authority of the **apostles** and prophets. Those men have already warned about these devil-controlled false teachers. Pay attention. The **Apostle** Peter had a similar warning in 2 Peter 3:2-3:

Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed.

(19) These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them.

A. The False Teachers Create Divisions

- While the Lord prayed for unity among His followers in John 17, these false teachers are **creating divisions**.

B. They Do Not Have The Spirit

- These teachers do not have the Spirit guiding them in any way.

(20) But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, (21) and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love. (22) And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering.

A. Believers Must:

- **Build each other up**, but not criticize one another. Faultfinding destroys believers.
- Believers are to **pray** for each other. By contrast, some believers do not know the names of others in the congregation where they worship, let alone pray for them.

B. Believers Are to Wait

- God will have **mercy** on believers faced with the pressure of the false teachers.

C. Believers Are To Show Mercy

- Just as the Lord shows **mercy** to us, His people must show **mercy** as well.

(23) Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives.

A. Rescue Others

- Rescuing fellow saints who are entrapped is a great work.

B. Be Careful

- Dangers are present, like clearing landmines.

(24) Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into His glorious presence without a single fault.

A. God Provides Strength To Stand In Life

- God does not ask us to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. He provides assistance by His Spirit within us.

B. God Will Bring Believers to Heaven Untainted

- When we arrive in God's presence, we won't be battered and beaten, barely able to stand. No, we will arrive **without a single fault!**

(25) All glory to Him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are His before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.

A. The Credit Belongs to God

- Other gods or self-help notwithstanding, the **glory** for this success against all evil goes to the **God** of heaven who saved us through **Christ**. May He reign over His subjects for all **time** and eternity!