

Jude

Lesson Two

Introduction And Purpose

Jude 1 – 4

1:1a Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James

- A. Jude is another form of the name Judah, and it means, “Renowned, praised, celebrated” (cf. Genesis 29:35).
- B. He was the brother of James, which also means that he was the half-brother of Jesus (cf. Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).
- C. Yet, instead of drawing attention to that physical relationship, Jude describes himself as “the servant of Jesus Christ.”
 - 1. The Greek word for ‘servant’ means, “Slave, bondman, or servant.”
 - 2. As used of Christians, it refers to a voluntary servanthood – “one who gives himself up to another’s will” (Thayer).
 - 3. It is described as one who is devoted to another to the disregard of his own interests.
 - 4. Jude – who before was not a believer in Jesus (John 7:1-8) – had become a faithful follower of Jesus the Christ (cf. Acts 1:14).
 - 5. All Christians must learn what it is to be a servant of the Lord.
- D. His message was to be accepted because he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, not because he was the brother of the Lord.

1:1b To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called

- A. No specific congregation or group of Christians is addressed by Jude.
- B. However, he does give an important three-fold description of a Christian.
- C. First, Christians are “called.”
 - 1. In the ASV, ESV, and LITV, the word “called” comes first in this list.
 - 2. Christians are called by the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14) out of the world and into the body of Christ (Romans 1:6-7; 8:28; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:3).
 - 3. In fact, they are called “Christians” – a name given by God (Acts 11:26).
 - 4. They answer that call by submitting in obedience to the Gospel.
- D. Next, Christians are “sanctified by God the Father.”
 - 1. To be sanctified is to be made holy, “to separate from profane things and dedicate to God.”
 - 2. Man is sanctified when his sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus (John 17:17; Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).
- E. Finally, Christians are “preserved in Jesus Christ.”
 - 1. The Greek word for ‘preserved’ means, “Guarded, carefully attended, observed; kept.”
 - 2. Those in Christ are watched and guarded by God.
 - 3. However, this is not unconditional and does not mean one cannot fall.

4. Jude himself taught that the individual has a responsibility to keep himself “in the love of God” (vs. 21; cf. John 10:28ff; 1 Peter 1:5 [Romans 1:16]).

1:2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied

- A. Mercy is kindness or goodwill toward those who deserve worse.
- B. Peace is a state of tranquility or harmony that comes from forgiveness of sins.
- C. Love is affection and benevolence toward another.
- D. All of these come from God and Peter wished for them to abound in these blessings.

1:3a Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation

- A. The word “beloved” indicates Jude’s affection and concern for his brethren.
- B. He had been giving diligence to write a letter to them.
 1. Perhaps this means that he was eager to write unto them (ESV).
 2. Or, it could mean that he was hastily attempting to write them (LITV).
 3. Maybe he was preparing to write or had already begun to write.
- C. The theme of his letter was to be: “The Common Salvation.”
 1. The Gospel is for all men, including the common people (Mark 12:37).
 2. All men face common temptations and tests (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 3. Those who believe and obey the Gospel share a common faith (Titus 1:4).
 4. They are united as family in a common salvation (Jude 3).
 5. Thus, they have all things common (Acts 2:44; 4:32).
- D. However, this initial letter was abandoned, unfinished.

1:3b 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. The phrase “it was needful” literally means, “I was held by constraint.”
- B. Something happened that made it necessary for Jude to change the message of his letter.
 1. Clearly, he became aware of a threat to the spiritual welfare of those to whom he was writing.
 2. This danger came from false teachers who were covertly infiltrating the church and seeking to lead souls astray with their errors.
- C. Thus, this letter was written to inform and to warn them of such false teachers.
- D. However, its primary purpose was to encourage them to “earnestly contend for the faith.”
 1. This verb means, “To struggle for; to agonize for; to wrestle, to contend.”
 2. It means that Christians are to put forth extreme effort in fighting for the faith!
 3. While this is true when it comes to evangelism, Jude’s emphasis is that it is also true in defending the faith.
 4. Thus, they were strongly to oppose and fight against both the false teaching and the false teachers who threatened the church.
 - a. Obviously, this is not a physical fight with fists or weapons.
 - b. Yet, there are physical consequences involved – confrontation, public rebuke, withdrawal of fellowship, etc.

- c. Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 13:6-11, 45-46; 15:1-2; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 9-11; Gal. 2:4-5, 11-14; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 5:20; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 9-11
- 5. Christians must boldly defend the faith of Christ.
- 6. Yet, they also must support those who earnestly contend for the faith.
- E. "The faith" is a reference to the Gospel of Christ.
 - 1. Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5; 24:24; Romans 1:5; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 1:23; 2:16, 20; Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 1:27; 3:9; Colossians 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:2; 4:1
 - 2. Thus, Christians are to defend the Gospel of Christ – the doctrine of Christ – against all error.
- F. The Greek word for 'once' actually means, "A single time; once, one time; once for all."
 - 1. This means that the Gospel was revealed and transmitted once, for all time.
 - 2. When God's revelation was completed, it was finished forever.
 - 3. It is "a permanent deposit, it will never be superseded, emended or modified" (Woods).
 - 4. The Bible is the perfect revealed will of God and needs no modification, addition, or "latter day" revelation (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).
 - 5. This demonstrates the fact that the Bible is man's source of authority in matters of faith and practice.
 - 6. Thus, by knowing the Truth of Scripture, those to whom Jude wrote could "earnestly contend for the faith" against the errors of false teachers.
- G. Thus, the purpose of Jude's epistle is stated: Christians must defend the doctrine of Christ against all error.

1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ

- A. These false teachers had "crept in unawares" and were posing a serious threat to the church.
 - 1. Literally, this word means, "To enter secretly; to slip in stealthily; to settle in alongside; or, to lodge privately."
 - 2. Perhaps they were "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29).
 - 3. They pretended to be faithful brethren but secretly sought to deceive others with their error (cf. Matthew 13:25; Acts 15:24; Galatians 2:4; Ephesians 4:14; 2 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 2:1-2).
- B. The phrase "who were before of old ordained" is one word in the Greek.
 - 1. Literally, it means, "Who were written of before, a long time ago."
 - 2. The ASV reads, "They who were of old written of beforehand."
 - 3. The ESV reads, "Who long ago were designated."
 - 4. The YLT reads, "Long ago having been written beforehand."
 - 5. In other words, God had previously warned that false teachers would threaten the faithful.
 - 6. And, their condemnation had already been made known.
- C. In their character, these false teachers were ungodly.
 - 1. They were unlike God in their thoughts and actions.
 - 2. They were irreverent, impious, and blasphemous.
- D. In practice, they turned God's grace into a license to lascivious living.
 - 1. Lasciviousness is the indulgence of fleshly appetites.

2. The true grace of God condemns such practices (cf. 2 Peter 2:18-19).
- E. In doctrine, they denied the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. Such attitudes and actions amounted to a denial of the Lord.
 2. One cannot claim to love and follow the Lord while disregarding and disobeying His Word (cf. John 14:15; 1 John 2:4).