

A Study of the Book of Jude

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 1:24, 25

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Introduction to the Book of Jude

1. Who was Jude?

- Jude is taken from the Hebrew name Judah, a very common name. In Greek this became Judas, but because of the evil done by Judas Iscariot, translators have changed this to Jude.
- Probably the youngest Jesus' half-brothers, which also included James, Joseph, and Simon. (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3)
- Names himself as the brother of James in v. 1, author of the book of James and a pillar of the church in Jerusalem.
- An unbeliever at one time. (John 7:5, Mark 3:21)
- Interfered with Jesus' ministry. (Matthew 12:46, John 7:3-4, Matthew 13:57) Jesus gave his mother's care to John rather than his brothers. (John 19:25-27)
- Waited for the Holy Spirit to come after the ascension. (Acts 1:12-14)
- Was married and active in the church. (1 Corinthians 9:5)

2. Who was the letter written to and what are the main points?

- Could have been to a specific group of people or to believers in general.
- Written to Jews (note the many Old Testament references).
- Very similar to 2 Peter 2. Peter possibly repeated things from Jude.
- Dated around 65 A.D.
- Passionately written to alert Christians to the dangers posed by false prophets.

A Study of Jude

Read Jude 1-16.

3. What message is Jude passionately trying to get across in this letter? (vs. 3-5)

He wanted to write about the joy of salvation, but saw the need to make the message more about fighting for the truth of the Gospel.

4. What two specific issues is he talking about in the last sentence of v. 4?

1. False teachers were saying that because they are saved by grace, they no longer had to fight against sin. Instead, they could do whatever they pleased because all would be forgiven.

2. People within the church were denying Jesus' divinity. While they claimed to be part of the church, they were tearing the very substance of it apart.

5. What are some examples of this in our world today?

1. Those who minimize sin and its consequences with euphemisms, making the message entirely about love and feeling good; those who rationalize their sin (divorce, abortion, the 6th commandment's prohibition of adultery) expecting that God won't really hold them accountable.

2. Those who put themselves and their ideas above or in addition to God and his teachings; those who deny the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture and make their opinion or reason the measure of truth. Equally as guilty are those who condone either situation.

6. Why do you think Jude used the examples from the Old Testament (rebellion of those delivered from Egypt, the fall of the angels, Sodom and Gomorrah in vs. 5-7, and Cain, Balaam and Korah's rebellion in v. 11) to discuss the problems of unbelief, immorality, and rebellion?

In each case the result was physical destruction and, more importantly, eternal separation from God.

These examples are warnings to those who would question the will of God, his justice, or the severity and reality of the consequences of sin.

• The Israelites had about 82 funerals a day for 40 years as all of the adults died before their children inherited the Promised Land! (Jeske, p. 331)

• Even the land around Sodom and Gomorrah was permanently destroyed for farming and nothing will grow there yet today (Jeske, p. 332)

• Balaam (Numbers 22-25,31) was a sorcerer who would get a fortune from the king of Moab if he put a curse on Israel. Balaam was killed and a plague killed 24,000 Israelites.

• Korah (Numbers 16) incited a rebellion against Moses and the earth swallowed him up along with his family and co-conspirators. Fire consumed the leaders who participated and a plague killed another 14,700 who mocked.

•One of the benefits of studying the Old Testament is the opportunity to see God in action as he intervenes in human history. Don't let the shock value of these warnings wear off. God's Word and commands are not to be taken lightly!

7. How do "these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority, and slander celestial beings" (v. 8)?

1. History, as well as our world today, shows that when people are no longer restrained by God's Word, sexual perversions multiply. But Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:15-19 that our bodies were bought with a price and belong to Christ.

2. With sin comes pride and arrogance, humility and submission to authority are erased. This is true of submitting to earthly authority as well as delighting in the surrender to God and his will.

3. The glories of God are ridiculed and rejected—glories such as creation, the virgin birth, Jesus' miracles, Jesus' death, resurrection and second coming—and emptied of their meaning. When people have no respect for God many of them sink to the level of animals, live like animals, and die like animals as the result of their depravity.

8. Jude's passion continues. How do the vivid images in vs. 12-13 further condemn the skeptics?

Each example shows a hollowness and disappointment, form without function, self-serving actions, purposeless existence. The blackest darkness is reserved for them.

Read Jude 17-25.

9. What makes people vulnerable to false prophets?

Listening to the world before going to God, questioning God instead of humbly accepting his ways, not studying our Bibles to learn the truth, laziness, ill-conceived priorities, lack of trust, lust, apathy...

10. Should the existence of false prophets surprise us?

No! Satan desires nothing more than to destroy the church and the believers within the church. Jesus told us there would be false prophets as a warning to be ready.

11. What would you say to someone who tolerates even a “very minor” false teaching, or to someone who joins a church because they like the people even though the church is not completely faithful to God’s Word?

With the passion of Jude, warn them they are playing with fire, with Satan who is much stronger than they are. Let them know you love them and are concerned for their souls. Let them know of God’s forgiveness and love. Let them know God isn’t kidding—look at the examples from history. Love and encourage them. Pray for them. Be careful so you don’t fall into the same trap.

12. What spiritual body-building plan could you put into place to keep you strong in God’s love?

Regular worship, daily Bible study, continuous prayer, unswerving trust in God’s promises, Christian friends, stay away from temptation . . .

13. What hope do you find in vs. 24-25?

God is fully able to safely keep all who put their trust in him, and he promises to do so. After so much discussion of sin and godlessness, we have the beautiful peace and reassurance of the gospel reaching out to take us home. Our majestic God is more powerful than sin and has declared victory over Satan. Praise be to God!

Prayer

References:

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