

Pastor Grady Covin
The Mission
August 19, 2026

Jude

Jude 1:1, Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:

2 Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” 10 But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

12 These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; 13 raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

16 These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.

I think we can probably agree that one of the greatest threats to the church's influence in the world is the world's influence in the church. And

that so happens to be what Jude thought about the church back in his day. And so Jude is writing this letter to warn us and to remind us of the spiritual dangers that surround the church today.

This letter of course was written by a man named Jude. And in the very beginning of this letter he introduces himself.

Look at **verse 1: He says, “Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:**

Now, the name Jude is another form of the name Judas, which, in turn, is the Greek version of the Hebrew name Judah. Now, we don’t know this for sure, but many conclude that the reason the name Jude is used rather than Judas is to distance this author from the memory of Judas Iscariot.

Now, Jude himself, tells us he’s the brother of James who is most likely the apostle James who was the half brother of Jesus. And so that makes Jude or Judas as he is called, and James both the half brothers of Jesus. And in Matthew 13:55, their names are listed along with two other half brothers. Judas, the brother of James is also listed as one of the apostles in Luke 6:16 and also in Acts 1:13. And then the Apostle John mentions him in John 14:22 as Judas, , not Iscariot.

Now, unlike James, Jude is relatively unknown. Which may be why he introduces himself as the brother of James, since James was the well-known pastor of the church in Jerusalem.

Now, Jude could have just said, “I’m the half brother of Jesus, the Messiah.” But he didn’t. Instead of focusing on his physical relationship to Jesus, he only mentions his spiritual relationship to Jesus. And he tells us that he is a servant, or a slave, of Jesus Christ. He’s the brother of James, but he is a servant of Jesus Christ.

Now in verse 3 we read Jude's purpose in writing this letter: He says,
3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Now, that word "contend" is a Greek word in which we get our word to agonize. And so Jude's not talking about contending or picking fights with unbelievers. He's talking about making every agonizing effort to defend the faith.

And he explains why in verse 4:

4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Jude's not concerned about people on the outside. He's talking here about people on the inside. And these people he's identified are not obviously or outrightly trying to destroy the church; they're actually trying to join the church. But they're wanting to change some things in the church to fit their lifestyle. Instead of embracing the truth of God's word, they're wanting to twist it around to fit their lifestyle.

Theologians call people like this apostates. Apostates are people who appear to want to follow Christ and may actually follow Christ for a time, but eventually they will abandon the faith to pursue their sensuality and their sinful lifestyles.

And so Jude highlights three kinds of temptation that have led people in the past to abandon their faith. And these temptations still exist today in the church.

The first is temptation is one that comes from special privileges. Jude mentions the Israelites who were delivered out of Egypt. But like verse 5 says, they were later “destroyed” because they “didn’t really believe.”

5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Now, notice exactly what Jude writes there in verse 5, he says it was the Lord, which is referring to the Lord Jesus, who saved the people out of the land of Egypt, and afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Your translation may say Jesus in fact.

Either way this is powerful statement that confirms the preexistence of Jesus as God the Son. And while the Bible teaches that He became a human through Mary’s miraculous conception, it’s teaching us that at the same time, Jesus is eternally existent. He has always existed as the second member of the Godhead as has the Holy Spirit.

And so when Jude says that Jesus, specifically, was the sovereign power that delivered Israel from Egypt; well, this is a very important truth that God wants us to understand. Jesus was and is and will always be.

But of course many of the Israelites wasted their privileges because of their unbelief.

But now, not only can temptation come from special privileges, it can also come from special authority.

Look at verse 6.

6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

Here Jude is referring to the sin of angels “who did not keep their proper domain or stay within their own position of authority, but rather left their proper dwelling.”

These angels at one time enjoyed a glorious position in the very presence of God. But for some of them, that wasn’t enough. And so they rebelled against God and they became what we call fallen angels, or demons.

And according to Jude 6, some of these demons are being “kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment.”

And many Bible teachers believe that Jude is referring to that passage back in Genesis 6:1-8, where some of these fallen angels possessed sinful men, and their offspring as a result corrupted the human race and that’s what eventually led to the judgment during the time of Noah, which was by water when the entire earth was flooded.

And so Jude’s point, is that positions of superior authority can lead to pride if we’re not careful. And in this context, he’s warning that people in authority in the church can sometimes become so proud that they think they know better than God, and know more than the Bible, and that can lead them to defying God.

Jude’s third warning is about temptation that comes from sexual desires. And he mentions here the sexual immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah:

7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

And so Jude says Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, which also indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, they all serve as an example of God's fiery judgment. In other words, they serve as an example of what hell will be like.

In Genesis 19 the Bible records how God sent down fire and sulfur, which I talked about last Sunday and how He destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, and several other nearby cities in that region with fire. And those cities' locations have been identified by archaeologists, by the ash and the burn layers that are still evident there even today. And the only city in the region that shows no signs of that fire and sulfur is the city of Zoar, which is where Lot and his family initially fled.

Archaeologists have dug up thousands of these little balls of sulfur about the size of a golf ball, which by the way are still flammable even today and still retain the smell of sulfur even though it fell from the sky over 4,000 years ago.

And so if people think it wasn't fair for God to judge them so severely, Jude is simply reminding people of that mindset that it's going to happen again one day, when all who reject God's word are going to be cast by God into into hell where there will be fire and brimstone, which is sulfur and their worm or their bodies will never be burned up, but suffer for eternity.

Now, following that history lesson, then Jude describes what apostates look like in any generation.

Look at verse 8.

8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, (specifically the authority of the word of God) and speak evil of dignitaries. (Your translation may say glorious ones.)

And then Jude explains that last phrase by telling us in verse 9 about an event not recorded anywhere else in Scripture:

9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Here not even Michael, the great archangel, would attempt to insult the devil. And this is a reminder that as we contend for the faith, our weapon is not to deliver insults, but to rather declare God’s Word, because only in and through God’s word can the devil be defeated.

Verse 10 says, But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

These are the apostate teachers which Jude then describes in verse 11.

11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

The way of Cain, of course, we read about in Genesis 4. It describes a path of rebellion, and pride, and an attempt on Cain’s part to approach God through human effort rather than divine grace. In the story of Cain and Abel, Cain rejected God’s instructions and then acted out of envy and anger.

Likewise, these apostates Jude says, do religious deeds their own way, instead of God’s way and they don’t care who gets hurt in the process.

Verse 11 says, they also commit “Balaam’s error for the sake of gain.” And this is referring back to Numbers chapter 22, where Balaam, just like these apostates desired to put money into his own pocket rather than serve

and obey God. In other words, he was content like so many people to sell his soul for money.

And then finally, Jude mentions Korah, who defied the authority of Moses. That story is in Numbers 16. And like Korah, these apostates that Jude is describing are rebelling against God's chosen leaders in the church.

And then in verses 12 and 13 we're given a description of these apostates. He says,

12 These are spots in your love feasts, (your translation may say (These are the ones who are hidden reefs in your love feasts) while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;

13 wild waves of the sea, churning up their own shameful deeds like dirty foam; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of darkness has been reserved forever.

So Jude gives us five comparisons here with respect to these apostates. They're called "hidden reefs" or hidden rocks which speaks of their unseen danger under the sea. You can't see them but they can destroy a ship if they run into one of them.

And then they're called "clouds without water" which speaks of their false promises. It looks like rain, but no water ever falls.

Then they're called "autumn trees without fruit" which speaks of the barren profession of their lives.

Then they're called "wild waves of the sea" which means for all their sound and fury, and all their action, and all their effort, all they do is stir up a bunch of dirt, and mire, and muck, and filth to deposit on the shore; and erode the basic foundation of the truth.

And then lastly they're called "wandering stars" because they have an aimless course coming from and going to nowhere. People traveling back then used to use the stars for direction, but a wandering star can give no direction.

Well, this imagery that Jude gives us here of these false teachers is very vivid. They're very graphic. And the reason is because these false teachers are very dangerous individuals. They make all these promises of spiritual provision, but they don't deliver. And the reason is because they're spiritually dead. They're barren. They don't have anything to offer short of hell. And all their activity and all their effort, are just empty words that clutter up the shore with useless debris.

And like a wave in the sea, they're here for a flash, and then they're gone without any benefit, without any rhyme or reason, and without any purpose, and then they just disappear forever into eternal blackness.

They lift themselves up and pretend to lift up all the people who follow them, but their end is eternal punishment.

And then in verses 14 and 15 Jude talks about that punishment as he brings up this prophecy about Enoch, one of the Old Testament patriarchs.

14 It was also about these people that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord has come 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."

This prophecy speaks of Christ's judgment when He returns to earth. He is not going to pick on one sinner or any one sin; everyone who rejected His Word and Jesus will be judged.

Listen, God's not giving us this description of these apostates so we can pat ourselves on the back, and brag about how much better we are than they are. He's giving us this information to remind us and motivate us to always defend the faith. But that starts with making sure first that we're walking in obedience to the Word of God. And so everyone of us needs to examine our hearts and our lives and make sure that we're not only doing what God has called us to do, but that we are doing our very best in what He's called us to do.

Amen?

Well, next time we're going to be talking about a divine warning that God through the apostle Jude has for the church. And so if you would, if you could read the rest of the book which is just one chapter, we'll hopefully finish up next week.