

## Jude's Letter Verses 1-25

### Day One

<sup>1</sup>Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup>Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. <sup>3</sup>Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. <sup>4</sup>For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

v. 1 – Many speculate that this Jude (or Judas) was the brother of Jesus and James:

"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" (Matthew 13:55-56).

This is a general letter to any and all believers, not just those who lived in a particular city or region. Jude wrote to those who were called, which means those who were set apart as holy to God, not to those who are “called” to the ministry. In fact, when God calls someone, it is not specifically to a ministry but to Himself as they serve in that ministry. So God’s call is relational and not task-oriented. The work He gives you should bring you closer to Him.

v. 2 – Jude blessed his readers not with idle words, but imparted to them mercy, peace and love in abundance. **Do you wish the same things for your fellow believers? Do you seek to be a source of those things for them? Do you use your words to bless as Jude did here? Do you fully understand your capability to be a blessing?**

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit (Proverbs 18:21).

v. 3 – Jude had one intention as he began to write but the Spirit showed him another need and that was to urge the readers to contend for their faith. That meant that there was opposition to the faith they held and Jude needed to equip them to fight to preserve it. That is almost always the case: The enemy of God and His people is always seeking to ruin the faith of those who come to God.

Notice that Jude did not say the Lord told him to write. He said he felt the need to write. **What do you feel the need to do? Are you talking yourself out of it? Do you need to take action today on some project that has the potential to help others?**

v. 4 – So perhaps Jude did have a specific church in mind, for it seems that he was addressing a problem in a church. Maybe he was addressing a problem that was universal at the time. At any rate, there were unbelievers and evil men who had infiltrated the churches. These men were denying the Lordship of Christ and were introducing immoral acts among the members of Christ’s body. This was totally unacceptable to Jude and he was determined to do something, even if it was just to write a letter to encourage the saints. So now we know to whom and why Jude wrote. Let’s move on to see what advice he gives the saints.

## Day Two

<sup>5</sup>Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. <sup>6</sup>And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. <sup>7</sup>In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

v. 5 – Jude reminded the readers of God’s power in the past to deliver His people as He did in Egypt. God delivered the people, yet they proceeded only a short distance before some rebels stirred up the people to unbelief. God had to destroy those rebels for the good of the others, as you can read in Exodus 16 when God opened the earth to swallow those who had stood against Moses. The implication is clear: Jude’s readers were facing the same dilemma from evil rabblers. If God acted then to deal with evil men in the midst of the holy, He will do it again, according to Jude.

v. 6 –Prior to Egypt God had dealt with those angels in the midst of His heavenly host who had turned to sin and rebellion. So Jude was quickly tracing God’s history and willingness of judging rebellion and sin in the midst of His creation. **Do you notice that God has bound the evil angels with chains until the final judgment?** That means that they are under his control. He determines how much latitude they have in what they do. This reminds me of what John wrote in Revelation:

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended (Revelation 20:1-3).

So don’t ever fret about evil. God is in control and holds the chains and the keys to those chains.

v. 7 – Here Jude provided the third example of God judging evil, this time from the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (see Genesis 19). These three examples are graphic stories of God’s ability to judge evildoers while preserving the righteousness. Since we know that

those things happened for our instruction, then you can be sure that God will do the same thing whenever necessary. You can be encouraged by that fact, but also fearful not to be numbered among those whom God will judge. You are not involved in a game or a social club, but rather the Church of the Living God! He is watching and has the power to reward or punish.

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope (Romans 15:4).

The Jews in the wilderness, the fallen angels and the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah all stand as vivid examples of God's patience ending with the wicked. God is patient but God will reach a limit and when He does, He moves in judgment. **Do you sense that Jude felt God was about to do the same in the churches who received this letter? Can you also see how this letter is positioned right before Revelation, in which God's judgment is portrayed again and again?**

### Day Three

<sup>8</sup>In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. <sup>9</sup>But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" <sup>10</sup>Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them. <sup>11</sup>Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

v. 8 – Jude returned to the sins of those to whom he was referring in his own day and age. He called them dreamers – an interesting choice of words. They did not operate in reality as to who God is and what pleases Him, so he saw them operating in unreality. They polluted their bodies, which must be a reference to sexual immorality. It is interesting how many cults and perversions of the truth lead to this problem, for without the truth, they have no hope of controlling their base desires.

These troublemakers also rejected authority. They were loners, who portrayed the truth as being given to them in special form or by special delivery. You will see in all my studies a recurring theme that the apostles and eyewitnesses of Jesus expected their teaching and direction to be followed explicitly and precisely. What they imparted they received from the Lord Himself, so they were intolerant of any deviations. What's more, these evil men slandered celestial beings, which is hard for us to comprehend exactly what they were doing.

I would guess that their perverted teaching they introduced to the church had not only denied the Lord Jesus but also called into question the integrity of the holy angels who served the Lord. They probably exalted the wicked angels as good and the holy ones as evil. Nothing was beyond the reach of these men's fantasies about spiritual reality.

v. 9 – Jude points out something of which we had no previous knowledge: that there was a dispute between celestial beings over Moses' body after his death. We know that Moses' body was not found by the Jews; he simply walked off when he went to be with the Lord (see Deuteronomy 34). **Could it be that the devil wanted to find his body so the Jews could set up a shrine to reverence Moses, while Michael had every intention of delivering the body into God's presence?** Keep in mind, Moses and Elijah both appeared to Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (see Mark 9:2-4 ), so perhaps Moses' body was translated to heaven,

The main point Jude made however, is that these evil men slandered celestial beings, while the celestial beings themselves understand a hierarchy that prevents them from doing so. Michael was cognizant of Satan's rank as an archangel and was careful what he said to him.

v. 10 – The evil men Jude was addressing had no sense of authority or propriety. They were addressing spiritual things, with eternal implications, but had no understanding what they were doing. The problem was that they were not only destroying themselves, but the innocent as well. Leaders must protect the flock from wolves and that was what Jude was doing.

v. 11 – Jude threw out several other examples of what these men were like. They were like Cain, who tried to impose his own sacrifice on the Lord instead of the one the Lord preferred. There was the prophet Balaam who showed the Moabites how to tempt Israel with foreign women so the men would no longer follow the Lord (and he did it for money). And they were also like the men who rebelled against Moses in the wilderness mentioned in Day Two of this study in Exodus

In these first eleven verses, Jude gave us six references of evil beings rebelling against God's order. In each case, God judged the perpetrators. The implication is clear. What was happening in the church then was of the same spirit and God was ready to judge those evildoers, just as he had the previous six examples.

#### Day Four

<sup>12</sup>These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. <sup>13</sup>They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. <sup>14</sup>Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones <sup>15</sup>to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

v. 12 – Now we see that these men were the leaders and shepherds, which makes sense. The enemy always attacks the shepherd:

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the Lord Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones (Zechariah 13:7).

These leaders were like clouds without rain and trees without fruit. In other words, they were useless! Leaders are supposed to do more than appear to be fruitful and productive; they are to produce. These men did not and were twice dead.

v. 13 – Jude used such graphic similes and metaphors! These men were wild waves, who tossed people here and there.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting (Ephesians 4:11-14).

They were also wandering stars, out of orbit and not following their celestial path. These men were not just deceived, they were a serious blight on and in the Body. Jude was making it clear that these men were in trouble and causing trouble and there was nothing good to say about them. They were not to be pitied or honored in any way. In fact, they were in danger of imminent judgment.

v. 14 – Jude introduced another story we had not seen before, this time the prophecy of Enoch about the Lord's judgment. God is no fool. He promised even from the earliest times of Genesis that He would come and judge those who were against Him, who spoke evil against Him. **I have to ask why we had not seen this prophecy prior to this point in Scripture?** I can only say that God did not believe we needed it until now, but did want to include it in His word, even at this late point in the Bible.

I am not too concerned about the reason for this late entry of this prophecy. It is not some topic we have not seen before, and it helps us to understand that God promised to judge His enemies very early in salvation history. What Jude was writing was a matter of record from the earliest pages of the Bible, so no one would have any excuse that they did not know.

What's more the picture in this prophecy is one of overwhelming power. God is coming again with His holy angels and He will do business: vindicate the righteous and judge the wicked. Nothing has changed since the beginning, except that the Son Jesus has been clearly introduced as head of the Church and Lord of all. Every living creature is to bow before Him.

Jude was not just speaking out against these leaders because they bothered him. He was writing because these men offended God. Jude was writing as God's representative. And

of course, this warning was not just for his generation, but for every generation from that point forward.

### Day Five

<sup>16</sup>These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. <sup>17</sup>But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. <sup>18</sup>They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." <sup>19</sup>These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

v. 16 – **The leaders Jude was addressing had all kinds of problems, didn't they?** Not only were they heretics, but they had bad character and expressed that character openly. Jesus promised that we would know His followers by their fruit and these men had bad fruit. This does not mean that a leader will ever be perfect; only Jesus was that. Yet these men knew how to manipulate people to keep them under their influence and use words to promote themselves and flatter others. I have watched that scene in modern times repeated over and over again, especially from those who make a living by traveling to churches and speaking. They know how to "market" themselves and flatter local leadership so they hopefully get a return invitation.

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears (Acts 20:29-31).

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:15-16).

v. 17 – Jude's remedy for this problem was to hold onto the apostolic tradition that was handed down to the people by the Lord's apostles. The same remedy holds for today. You and I must also hold fast to that apostolic tradition, which was handed down to us through the Word of God. What's more, the Holy Spirit will help you know the truth as you read and study the Word. I have talked to many people who talk themselves out of what they are sensing and what the Spirit was trying to show them. They sensed a situation was bad, but they ignored it or said, "No, that can't be right" and proceeded down the wrong path. **Are you talking yourself out of anything that the Spirit and the Word are showing you? Are you in a bad church situation where the leadership is manifesting bad fruit and you are afraid to do something about it?**

vs. 18&19 – The apostolic founders of the churches Jude was writing had been warned: They were told that Satan's ploy would be the same over and over again. He would attack the so-called leaders, trying to pervert them and their message. Their goal would be to divide the flock around their own personality and insights and they would seek to divert attention from the Lord Jesus Christ onto themselves. Their personalities would be

the focus instead of the Lord. If I am not mistaken, this is exactly what Satan himself tried to do, by making himself the focus and minimizing God. So you can see, his tricks are not new, but they are certainly effective. Jesus had promised:

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it (Matthew 16:18).

Just because hell won't prevail does not mean it won't *try* to prevail. And the book of Revelation clearly outlines that the kingdom of darkness will try over and over again to overthrow God's rule and destroy His people. We know that God is always victorious, but that doesn't mean there won't be battles to endure. **Are you mindful of the continuous warfare in which you are engaged? Do you know you cannot win this battle without total dependence on Him? Do you also know that you may need to exercise courage and faith to confront evil, even if it is among those you love and respect?**

### Day Six

<sup>20</sup>But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

v. 20 – Finally, Jude moved the focus from the rebels and reprobates to those who remained faithful to the Lord and His cause. He urged each one to build him or herself up in the most holy faith. **How can you build yourself up?** One way is to pray in the Spirit. There are many definitions of what this means, and some don't believe that can happen apart from speaking in tongues. Others don't hold that position. I will let you make up your own mind while reading some other admonitions to pray in the Spirit:

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:26-28).

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints (Ephesians 6:18).

**So how do you define praying in the Spirit?** However you define it, it is certainly praying with the Spirit's help and guidance. **Are you praying as much as you can in the Spirit?**

**Then how else can you build yourself up in the holy faith?** I would think there is giving, serving, reading the Word, hard work, and fasting. **Can you think of any**

**others? Is there any one practice that is particularly useful for you as you build yourself up?**

It is interesting that prayer is not just to have your petitions heard on high, but also to build you up personally in your walk in the Lord. That indicates that prayer is an act of self but not necessarily a selfish act. **Does that make sense?**

v.. 21 – Jude wanted the faithful to keep themselves in God’s love. **How can you abide in God’s love?** You can only do so by God’s grace as you keep His commandments! Jesus was clear about this throughout John’s gospel.

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love (John 15:10).

Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me" (John 14:22-24).

Yet while you obey, you cannot see your obedience as earning the gift of eternal life. It is God’s gift to you and your obedience proves and confirms your calling but does not earn your calling. That is solely through God’s mercy. Then once you have received mercy, you are to be a source of mercy for and to others. **How is your level of mercy these days, high or low?**

### Day Seven

<sup>22</sup>Be merciful to those who doubt; <sup>23</sup>snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh<sup>24</sup>To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— <sup>25</sup>to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!  
Amen.

v. 22 – Jude was tough on those leaders who were renegade and rebellious, but he was gentle toward those who believed. Yesterday we ended our study by looking at mercy. Today Jude adds one more expression of mercy, and it was to be to those who doubted. One size does not fit all people, so to speak, when you are dealing with different personalities and levels of maturity in the faith. I always refer to what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about this very issue with some important guidelines:

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that

nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else (1 Thessalonians 5:12-15).

**Are you merciful to those who doubt, who are weaker in their faith than you are?**

v. 23 – When someone sins, you are not to ignore their sin, but show mercy, while not being pulled into their sin.

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, <sup>5</sup>for each one should carry his own load. (Galatians 6:1-4).

**Do you see it is a matter of sensitivity to the Spirit to know what problem you are dealing with in another's life and respond according to the Spirit's direction?** Again, one response does not fit all problems or people. You must become adept at recognizing what the real issue is and respond accordingly. Sometimes it's pure mercy, sometimes mercy mixed with caution.

vs. 24&25 – What a beautiful ending to a short letter. This impresses me that not everything we do has to be long and drawn out to be effective. How often I have put things off because I did not believe I had the time, but it would only take a few minutes. **What have you been putting off because you don't have time, but perhaps could be done in much less time than you are anticipating?** You won't know that until you try, so try it and see if it takes less time and causes you to be more obedient.

Jude ended with a magnificent uplifting praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He reminded them and us that the Lord Jesus is able to keep us until the day He presents us to His heavenly Father. Jude did not end his short letter on a down note, but returned our attention to where it always belongs: on the Lord Jesus.

No matter what problem you are facing, you are wise to end your deliberations, seeking and focus with praise for Him. He is indeed worthy and He is capable of delivering you from any dilemma and problem. Here Jude "ascribed" greatness to God, assigning Him all positive attributes as he closed. And as we close, let us do the same by reciting Psalm as a fitting tribute of worship to the Lord, who is our all in all:

Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.