**JUDE (1)**

**September 23, 2020**

**Introduction**

“Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, to those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people” (Jude 1-3).

Jude, like the other general epistles, takes its name from its author. S. Maxwell Corder states, “The last epistle of the New Testament relates the deeds and teaching of evil men who will be living upon the earth as the history of the professing Church comes to an end.”

Jude only contains twenty-five verses or four hundred sixty-one words, making it the fourth shortest book in the New Testament. However, it is a fitting introduction to the Apocalypse and the events that will unfold in the future for the Church as well as the entire cosmos.

**Content of the Book**

Unlike some of the other books of the New Testament that deal with more than one theme, Jude, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes with a sense of urgency as he focuses on the coming apostasy.

Jude uses vivid language to describe the events that will transpire in the future. The brevity of the book conveys the sense of urgency Jude is writing with to warn the Church that false teachers needed to be condemned and removed from the church immediately.

The word “apostasy” is not found in the Bible but it is a transliteration of 1 Timothy 4:1 which says, “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith” (KJV) and 2 Thessalonians 2:3 which states, “except there come a falling away first” (KJV).

Apostasy can be defined as a “departure from the teachings of the Bible, and an apostate is a person who believes and teaches the doctrine of apostasy.”

**Structure**

*vv. 1-2—Greeting*

Jude begins his epistle by stating who his intended audience is. First, it is for those who are called. These individuals have heard the Gospel, and as the Holy Spirit convicted them, they surrendered their lives to Christ and received his salvation. Second, it is for those who are loved. Because these individuals have received salvation, they are now the children of God whom he loves just as he loves Jesus. Thirdly, it is for those who are being kept for Jesus Christ. The idea of being kept for Jesus Christ is a truth that believers can hold on to during difficult times—especially a time of apostasy.

Jude begins his epistle that will ultimately address troubling times within the Church with mercy, peace, and love.

*vv. 3-4—Purpose for Writing*

Jude clearly states his initial purpose in writing was to talk “about the salvation we share,” however; something happened that changed his mind and caused him to say, “I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people” (Jude 3).

Jude raises two questions in this verse, first, what is “the faith,” and second, who is to contend for it?

In verse four, Jude describes what the apostates that had secretly slipped into the church are like: “They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”

Jude knew this type of teaching left unchallenged would cause tremendous harm within the Church. Because of this, he tackles the issue of apostasy head-on.

*vv. 5-7—God’s Judgments in the Past*

Jude now gives his readers three examples from the Old Testament of how God responded to individuals guilty of the similar sins he is warning them about. Two deal with God’s judgment against mankind and one deal’s with his judgment against the rebellious angels:

The first concerns the people of the Law, representing the Jews. The second concerns heavenly beings. The third concerns the people outside the Law, the equivalent of Gentiles.

The first incident ended in destruction. The second ended in their being kept in everlasting bonds until the final Day of Judgment. The third resulted in their suffering ‘eternal fire,’ a fire that had eternal consequences from which there was no recovery. In each case the punishment was final.

It is interesting to note that Peter, like Jude, chooses to write about three incidents in 2 Peter—the fall of the angels, the Flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah in Scriptural order.

*vv. 8-19—Character and Doom of False Teachers*

Jude takes his readers back to the Old Testament to remind them of examples of apostasy they would have been familiar with—Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

Just as God judged those found guilty in the Old Testament examples Jude writes about, Jude warns his reader that the present-day apostates within the Church will not escape the coming judgment of God unless they turn to Christ with sincere hearts.

*vv. 20-23— Exhortations to Build Their Faith*

Unlike the ungodly that tear down and destroy the faith Jude has talked about to this point, he now turns his attention to those he calls “dear friends” (Jude 20). Instead of the ungodliness, separation, and sensuality he has previously described, Jude now uses words like faith, love, and mercy.

Praying in the Holy Spirit now replaces the apostate prayers that are void of the Spirit. There is a shift in Jude’s writing as he nears the end. He moves from challenging his readers to “contend for the faith” in verse three to exhorting them to build themselves up in the faith.

Jude goes on to describe a vital piece of how believers are to build themselves up as they contend for the faith—“praying in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20b). It is important to observe that Jude’s only mention of the Spirit follows his description of the intruders who do not have Spirit in v. 19.

Jude tells his readers that prayer is a vital part of Christian growth and security. Neglecting it may prove spiritually injurious to them.

As he nears the end of his writing, Jude challenges his readers to do their part to win the lost based on their personal witness similar to Jesus admonition to his disciples in Luke 24:46-49: “He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.’”

*vv. 24-25—Concluding Doxology*

Jude ends his epistle with words of encouragement for his readers. He reassures them that it is possible to live godly lives even though ungodly people surround them. However, this is only possible because of the sacrifice Jesus Christ made for them—he alone can keep them from falling and being deceived by the apostates like so many in the Church had done.