

Jude

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Preacher: Ivan Jones

[0 : 00] So this morning, I have chosen the book of Jude. I chose it because it's simple, and by the way, it's very rugged. So if you have your Bibles, you can go ahead and turn there. It is actually the very next to last book in the New Testament before Revelation.

I like it because it's clear, and also because it's easy to understand. But what I find interesting about Jude is that it is rarely preached on and is seldom read, though you'll notice in verses 24 and 25 the doxology that most of us really love to hear and to read.

And I think the reason that I'm choosing Jude is because of his focus on false teaching. It is extremely scary when we hear about those who are abusing the Word of God, not believing in Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son, that he was fully God and fully man.

And it's important for us to understand that we know the Word of God and be warned against those false teachers. His warnings against false teachers are extremely harsh.

And why is it harsh? Because folks, what's at stake? We're talking about the life and death issues when we talk about our life in Christ. We talk about the costliness and the preciousness of the salvation that God's Son purchased for you and I.

[1 : 37] We're talking about the grace, the full grace, the full grace, amazing grace in the mercy of God, the dishonoring of who Christ is, and also the danger of deceiving people.

So I think it's worthy for us to read. So if you would, please stand with me, and we'll read all 25 verses. Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, may mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our Lord into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once and for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe, and angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode.

[3 : 02] He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they, in the same way as these, indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Yet in the same way, these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. But Michael, the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but simply said, The Lord rebuke you.

But these men revile the things which they do not understand and the things which they know by instinct. Like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. Woe to them, for they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the air of Balaam and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

These are men who are hidden wreaths in your love feasts, when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves, clouds without water, carried along by winds, autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted.

Wild waves of the seas, casting up their own shame like foam, wandering stars for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of his holy ones 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.

[4 : 44] These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts, they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, in the last time there will be mockers following their own ungodly lusts.

These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

And have mercy on some who are doubting, and save others, snatching them out of the fire. And on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Now, to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless with great joy, that the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

Amen. Would you pray with me? Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time that we can gather in your name, to be in your presence, to hear the word of God. We ask, Heavenly Father, that you would speak to us through your word.

Father, that we would understand and know you as you are, so that we would never be misled by false teachers. And we ask, God, that you, again, would work in our hearts, so that we can be truly sons of the Lord Jesus Christ, and children of the Son of Jesus.

[6 : 26] And that you, Father, would be glorified in what we do and say. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. You may be seated. I think this is really important.

I saw, again, Jesus actually dealt with this a little bit himself. In Luke 17, 1 and 2, hear what Jesus says. He warns, is that inevitable stumbling blocks will come, but woe to him who they come. It would be better to him if a milestone were hung around his neck and he is thrown into the sea. Then he caused one of these little ones to stumble. Of course, he was talking about little children, but the truth is we're all children of God.

And it's so important for us to be aware of false teachers and make sure that we do not be deceived by those. What's interesting is Jude is the author of this, and we don't really know a whole lot about Jude.

Jude simply discloses himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. It's interesting that he, again, claimed that he was brother of James.

[7 : 33] James, of course, was the head of the church in Jerusalem, but he's also, he was a half-brother of Jesus, but he makes no claim to that whatsoever. But he does say that he is a bondservant of Jesus Christ.

Truly, a bondservant was considered a slave, one who devoted themselves entirely to a master, one who worked without wages. And even though both James and Jude did not believe in Christ at the moment when he was ministering alive, they came to believe after the resurrection and saw him alive.

The readers and the listeners of this letter that Jude wrote, who we do not know who it was sent to, it apparently was not to a church, he simply calls them his friends, was probably, again, to fellow Jewish believers, those who, again, were brought up as true Jewish brethren.

And they, he refers many times to Jewish history here, so they would recognize what he was talking about. It was written in the late 70s, apparently before Jerusalem was destroyed because Jude doesn't mention that at all.

And also, Jude directly quotes from 2 Peter 2, 1 and 2, where Peter anticipates the coming of false teachers. And if you were here the last two Sundays where the pastor talked about 2 Peter, he mentions the fact that it's going to deal with false teachers as well.

[9 : 08] What's really interesting to me is, have you ever thought about and imagined what it would have been like with James and Jude to grow up with Jesus Christ? What it would have been to be, have him as a half-brother?

In other words, what was that like? Many of you have children. You know how siblings treat each other. You know how they get along. We had the pleasure of having three sons. There were moments we wondered, do we really want to claim them? And as always, the two older, our Jared, who most of you know, was the youngest. And they always accused Janet and I of having him to be the favorite.

Not true. But I wondered if that's how James and Jude looked at Jesus. Was he specially treated? But you know what? I was thinking also, what did they do when they were little kids, how they played together?

In my generation, our kids, the little ones would get together and play cowboys and Indians. Do they still do that? I don't know what they do now. Do you?

[10:15] Haven't been around that long. But I know Jesus and his brothers didn't play cowboys and Indians. I have a feeling they probably played Israelites against the Philistines. And guess who was the Israelite?

Jesus. Guess who were the Philistines? His brothers. Maybe that's why they didn't like him. I don't know. I'm just kidding. So what do we say?

I have several points to speak to you this morning. I'm not going to tell you how many so that you'll be happy when I say finally. Is that fair enough? But I would like you to note, first of all, that Jude reminds you and I of who we are.

He says, first of all, that we are called. You're not here by accident. You are here because God called you personally to come to know him and to believe in him.

You were specifically chosen by him. And that's why we need to be faithful to him. He also says we are beloved. We are beloved by God.

[11:20] It's an amazing concept that the God of the universe would love you and I. And also because we are beloved by God that we love one another. That amazes me also, especially the love that I've been shown by you all.

Because I know I'm not that lovable. Ask Jan. But he also says that we are kept for Jesus Christ. What a position you and I have.

We are kept by the Lord Jesus Christ. We're never alone. Many people struggle with this great sense of loneliness. But Jesus has promised to never leave us, never forsake us.

That's who we are. That's why we come and gather and praise the Heavenly Father. But I want you to note, secondly, that there were a threat and a menace to the church.

He calls them that these ungodly, false teachers came creeping in. We usually think of Satan as one who attacks the church from the outside. What's interesting at this time, there were ungodly people who were attacking the church from the inside.

[12:32] These false teachers look like the real thing. And we can do that, can't we? We can act like it. We can dress like it. But the reality is how we live and what we believe that shows that we are truly sons and daughters of Jesus Christ.

And the two basic denials that these false teachers were coming in, they were perversions. First of all, it says that they were marked as ungodly people who turned the grace of our God into licentiousness.

They basically were living immoral lives, particularly in a sexual manner. Here was their teaching. They said that the spirit is good, but the matter is evil.

And because the body is matter, it is going to be evil, but the spirit is good. So that because matter is evil, you can go ahead and do anything you want, live like you want.

It doesn't matter because you've been saved by grace. And that because of grace, God's going to forgive you of everything you do. It's okay. Live like you want.

[13:48] You're under grace. That's a perversion of the cost of what Jesus Christ died for us. And that's a perversion of the good news that we've been delivered from that sin and we're able to live in honor of Jesus Christ.

They taught that the law was completely dead. Jesus said, I came, I didn't come here to abolish the law. I came to fulfill the law. So we have to be careful if we hear, and there are pastors that truly preach from the gospel.

You can live what you like. Once you know Jesus, be whoever you want to be. And that is so wrong when we consider the price that it costs God's son to give us grace and mercy.

And Paul even writes about that in Romans. He says, hey, should we then just send more? He said, by no means. We are being called to be like Jesus Christ.

But the second perversion of the gospel was the fact that they did not believe that Jesus Christ was a son of God, fully man, fully God.

[14 : 55] They believed that Jesus, because again, body was evil, that he didn't really have a physical body, that he was kind of like a ghost or a spirit.

Folks, not believing in the incarnation, that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, came fully man, and was fully God, was being accepted.

You have to wonder, why in the world would these people listen to that and believe that and be deceived by it? Can we be honest? It tickles our ears. I mean, it sounds good, doesn't it?

Wow, I'm saved. I can just go out and do anything. But they're failing to understand the whole gospel and the whole counsel of God. Listen to the scriptures.

First, second, I'm sorry. First Peter 1 16. You shall be holy because I am holy. Hebrews 12 14.

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy.

[15 : 53] Without holiness, no one will see the Lord. Ephesians 5 1. Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children. John 15 19.

As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. And I'll pause there to say, as I look and I view and I see, I'm worried.

It's very hard today to distinguish believers and people who are of the world. That line, I pray, is being blurred. And Matthew 5, I quoted that.

Sorry about that. So the bottom truth here, the simple truth is, folks, false doctrine leads to what? False living. We must know what the word of God says. So what's interesting, I don't know about you, but I don't want to be a false teacher.

Look what Jude says about those men who were perverting the gospel. He warns them the unbelief and the outcome of being a false teacher greatly. By reminding them of other false believers, other false leaders.

[17 : 00] He mentions, of course, the example of the Jewish people in the wilderness. They were again told, go, conquer the land that I promised to you.

Twelve spies were sent out. Ten came back, said, nope, can't do it. They didn't believe. They didn't trust God. Two said, yes, we can take them. Guess who won out? But they didn't go.

And what happened to those people who did not believe God? Punished them by having them die. They never saw the promised land. Then he refers, of course, to the angels.

Well, obviously, we know there were angels that did not believe God, did not take his word. Satan fell. He took a group of fallen angels with them. And notice in this part where the angels again came down in Genesis.

they possessed the men who had relationships with the women and they bore giants. What did God do to them?

[18 : 02] 2 Peter 2.4 says it well, for if God did not spare angels when they have sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to parts of darkness reserved for judgment.

God took care of those who did not truly believe. And then he mentions Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah, we know well, the immorality that took place there and what happened to those.

So, Judah's trying very hard to tell the people, don't listen to them. Don't follow their teaching. Know what the truth is. Of course, we're fortunate.

We have the whole counsel of God today. Those people at that time obviously had the Old Testament. There may have been writings by Matthew and Mark and others, the letters that were sent around, but we are so beneficial because we have it all.

We have the whole canon. We have all the authority of God's word. But then Jude does something really odd. You'll notice here he talks about Michael, the archangel, in verse 9 when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses.

[19 : 06] That's not in the word of God. That's actually an apocryphal book called The Assumption of Moses. It's a wonderful story and the Jewish people who are hearing this, they knew the history.

They knew these books. The Assumption of Moses where Michael, the angel of God, was to take Moses' body and take it home and bury it where or take it where it's supposed to be.

Satan wanted it. Satan wanted the body of Moses. He wanted to have the body of Moses so he could create a shrine so that they would make Moses an idol and worship him. But you notice again, Michael's faith and believe in God. He didn't try to diminish the fact that he had this fellow angel. He simply didn't command him by his own authority. He said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you. And that's what we need to do when we hear the word being taught incorrectly. We need to approach them and let them know, no, that's not what God says. [20 : 12] This is what God has to say to us. And then Jude continues. Boy, I tell you what, every time I read this, I think, I don't ever want to be a false teacher.

I mean, he keeps looking at those who fail to believe, fail to follow the word of God. He then compares them to historic figures that you and I know well. We know Cain's offense. Cain was supposed to sacrifice and he gave an improper sacrifice to God and Cain was dismissed. And then he talks about Balaam. Balaam in Numbers was a prophet who, false prophet, who was offered money for financial reward to try to incite the Jewish people into immorality. And unfortunately, they followed that. But we also know in Joshua, what happened to Balaam, Balaam was killed by a sword. And then lastly, he talks about the Korah. Korah, and again, following the Jews in the wilderness, they rejected Moses' leadership. Moses was appointed by God to be the leader. They wanted to rebel. [21 : 23] They didn't want to believe what Moses had been told by God to do. And if you remember the story in Numbers again, Korah and 250 of his followers were simply swallowed up.

by the earth. So Jude is trying to let the folks know, don't follow them. They don't have a good ending at all.

And next, I would have you note this really very poetic, I think, and interesting use of images to describe the characteristics of these false teachers.

Look at verse 12 and 13. He calls them spots in a love feast. When we heard that term, spots in a love feast, he's talking about the times that the early church gathered together.

They would have meals together, but they would also have communion. And his spots on the love feast, these men thought that they were a little bit better than others, and they kind of hung out by themselves.

[22 : 20] They felt like they knew more than the others. And they were like spots on an ugly garment. And they were abusing, again, communion.

And then they also were what were called clouds without water. There was a time there, again, we had a little drought in the early part of the spring, and I know the farmers were begging for water. But we would see days where it was cloudy and no rain was always a disappointment. That's a great picture that these men looked like they were promising, but they were not promising at all. They were disappointing. They were no refreshing that water and the rain brings. They called them carried along with the winds. These are people just going any direction, whichever way they felt led and what to go.

They called them autumn trees without fruit. They were producing no fruit. You and I are called to produce good fruit by our lives, by living for Christ. They were called wild waves of the sea.

[23 : 22] And you know what wild waves do. If you're on a ship, it's beating you up. It's destroying you. If you're on a beach, you notice that water and waves hitting rocks and how it can erode them.

And then finally, he called them wild stars or wandering stars. That sounds like he was referring to a meteor or maybe a falling star that for a moment appears very bright, but at the last moment, fades away and it's absolutely nothing.

Poetic ways of describing the characteristics of the false teachers. And then once again, Jude goes to another apocryphal book called the book of Enoch.

And what's interesting is what he says about Enoch. It was also about these men that Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied saying, behold, the Lord came with many thousands of his holy ones 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.

Enoch prophesied way beforehand that this would happen. There would be false teachers. But what's beautiful here is in this book of Enoch, though it was not part of the agreed upon scripture to be put in the Bible, they, Enoch prophesied that there would be false teachers but also that the coming of Jesus Christ would come and take care of that.

[24 : 51] It really is prophesying what is revealed in Revelation. So what do we do? So what do we do? He concludes his letter by saying, okay, how do we protect ourselves from false teachers?

What is our responsibility? Well, he gives us four solutions. First of all, he tells us, build yourself up. Build yourself up in the faith. How do you do that?

Folks, it takes daily reading of the word of God. It takes daily studying of what this word has to say. 2 Timothy 2.15 says very clearly, study yourself and to show yourself approved.

And in Acts 17 where Paul was preaching to the Bereans, it says the Bereans examine the scriptures daily to check out what Paul was preaching.

We have that responsibility. Whatever, whoever speaks to us, whoever we're listening to, we should take home and go and look and see, is that what the word of God truly says?

[25 : 59] And then he says, secondly, we need to pray daily and also to pray in the Holy Spirit. not to simply recite certain prayers that we know by heart, but to sit quietly and ask the Holy Spirit to direct us in our prayers, to lead us to what we should be praying about.

Thirdly, he says, stay in love with God. How do you stay in love with God? It's just like, how do I stay in love with this lady down here in the front pew by spending time with her, by investing all my efforts to please her, to show her kindness and affection.

That's what we should be doing, spending time with God, staying close to him in an unbroken fellowship. J.C. Ryle, a minister in the 18th century in Britain, said it really well.

Every day, you are either getting closer to God or you're going farther off. To protect us from those false teachers, we need to make sure we stay in love with God.

And then finally, he says, wait for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever's happening in our life, no matter what's going on, we need to make sure that we wait for Jesus Christ because he's coming back.

[27 : 17] He's promised that. And then finally, there's that word, finally, our efforts to reclaim those who are living. What do we do with those people who have believed the false teachers, those who have fallen away from the true faith?

Well, it's our duty, folks, to try to rescue them. We're not to turn our back on them. It says, consider our relationships with God and show them great compassion. We are to have mercy on them.

We are to love them even though we oppose what they believe and how they're living. It says here also that we are actually literally, in verse 23, snatching them out of the fire and then finally to have some mercy with fear.

It's our job. We are truly our brother's keepers. And we do it in a respectful way, not in a hateful way, but we simply show them the word of God and say, here's what the word of God says.

How does that line up with what you've been told by those who may lead? 1 Peter 3.15 says it well, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

[28 : 36] That's our responsibility. And I love coming to the conclusion because the conclusion is the wonderful doxology that Jude wrote. Listen to it again.

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time now and forever.

Did you catch the promises? First, that we are promised that he's going, God is going to keep us from slipping. God is going to keep us from falling.

By staying faithful to his word and to him. And then also the great promise that Jesus Christ is our keeper. He's our savior. He's our perfecter. And it's hard to believe but it's also this great promise. You and I before God when we stand, even though we have been sinful creatures, God will see us through the blood of Jesus Christ as righteous, perfect, blameless before him.

[29 : 42] we serve a great savior. One who deserves us to truly believe that he is truly the son of God. That he is truly fully man.

That he died for us on the cross of Christ, on the cross of Calvary. That he is one that we need to believe in and listen to at all times. So false teachers, they're going to be here a long time.

They're here now and more will come. We are asked to contend for the faith. How do we do that? We continue to believe that the word of God is inspired, is inerrant, and that it is authority and is sufficient for all our needs.

The Bible is complete. The word is done. The canon is done. And we can trust that. Judah's calling us to fight, folks. We are to fight for the truth.

And we must fight for the truth. Amen? Will you stand with me as we pray? And as Trish comes to lead us in a song of invitation, the altar is always open to those who might want to come and pray if you've made a decision about Christ.

[30 : 59] Trish, please come and lead us in a song. Amen.